THE 15874

Mending the Web: Conflict Transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians

Thesis submitted by:
Polly O. Walker B.S., M.A.

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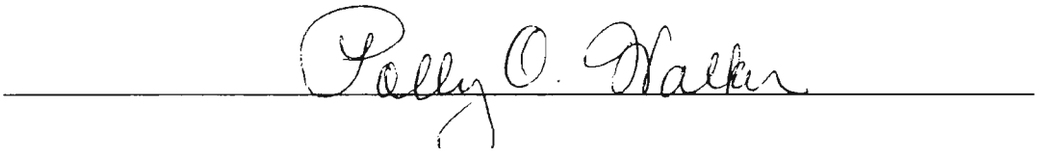
The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original and is my own work, except as acknowledged in the text. This material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.



ABSTRACT

Mending the Web: Sustainable Conflict Transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians

This thesis illuminates the processes of sustainable conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. The literature review explores Indigenous approaches of consensual conflict processing, discussing the central characteristics of the worldview underlying the methodologies. The literature review also compares Indigenous methods of consensual conflict processing with Western conflict resolution and conflict transformation methods, examining differences and similarities in worldview. This thesis discusses the ways in which Indigenous worldviews have been and continue to be suppressed through the processes of colonisation.

In the literature review the author identifies the central characteristics of the worldview underlying Australian Aboriginal, Native American and Native Hawaiian models of processing conflict: interconnectedness, emphasis on processes and relationships; inclusion of holistic experience; and expanded conceptualisations of time. These characteristics are contrasted with the central characteristics of the dominant Western worldview underlying problem solving models of processing conflict. This worldview is characterised by: a mechanistic paradigm which is atomistic and analytical; emphasis on technique rather than process; privileging the intellectual aspects of experience; and linear conceptualisations of time. The author argues that because of these differences in worldview, implementing Western problem solving models in conflicts involving Indigenous peoples at best leads to short term solutions to conflict, and at worst may exacerbate existing conflicts.

This thesis proposes a connection between Indigenous and Western consensual conflict processing in that the practice of Western conflict transformation is based on a worldview similar to that of Indigenous consensual conflict processing. The third literature review chapter identifies the central characteristics of Western conflict transformation to be: a paradigm of interconnectedness; emphasis on relationship and process; holistic experience; and expanded conceptualisations of time.

The author suggests that this thesis serves as an example of conflict transformation in and of itself in that it creates a synthesis on several levels: it integrates Indigenist and

emergent Western epistemologies and methodologies; it proposes a synthesis of Aboriginal and non-Indigenous participants' experiences of conflict transformation; and it explores the interconnections between Western conflict transformation and the ethnopraxis discussed in the findings chapters.

In the methodology section, the author describes this research project's emphasis on story, maintaining that use of story in data collection and analysis bridges both Indigenous and Western epistemologies. Use of story as a research method supports interconnections between personal experience and the web of larger experience and meaning.

The methodology of Interconnected Knowing utilised in this research is designed to support both Indigenist and emergent Western epistemologies in that: it is based on a paradigm of interconnectedness; focuses on processes and relationships rather than technique; involves expanded concepts of data; and integrates intellectual, emotional, bodily and spiritual aspects of experience.

The findings chapters demonstrate that conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians involves a complex web of interconnected projects and programs designed to implement long term positive social change. The author discusses the ways in which the practices of colonisation have silenced Indigenous knowledge and practice of conflict transformation. Rather than drawing solely on literature, the author has focused on ethnopraxis, participants' experience of transforming conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. This thesis increases current knowledge regarding ethnoconflict theory and practice.

This thesis proposes a synthesis of participants' experience of conflict transformation, the author's field research and experience, and written accounts of the experience of other Australians involved in conflict transformation. The synthesis is expressed through six themes which represent the authors' understanding of the central characteristics of the process of conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. These themes illuminate processes of

- Developing deep understanding
- Utilising the power of emotions
- Developing relationships
- Working together to implement positive social change
- Balancing inequalities

- Personal transformation

This thesis proposes that sustainable conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians is a process of understanding of the issues underlying current conflict, improving relationships, and supporting an infrastructure of programs and projects that increase social justice.

In the final section, conclusions are drawn regarding the inadequacies of Western conflict problem solving models of conflict resolution in conflicts between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in colonised societies. Links are made between Western conflict transformation and the ethnopraxis illuminated within this research. The findings of this research refer directly to the Australian context, yet may have implications for other Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples seeking to transform conflict within deeply divided societies.

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Ga li e li ga, Wa do – I am grateful; thank you.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

> We must think about the healing of people and the rebuilding of the web of their relationships...(Lederach 1997, p. 78).

In this thesis I illuminate the processes of sustainable conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians, the mending of the web of interconnections disrupted through colonisation. In Australia the colonisation of Indigenous peoples has resulted in a legacy of alienation and protracted conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of society. I maintain that addressing these conflicts in meaningful and sustainable ways involves developing and rebuilding relationships as well as addressing both immediate and systemic conflicts.

Throughout this thesis, I argue that the dominant Western models of conflict resolution are not adequate for addressing conflicts between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. First, in conflict situations that are characterised by generational mistrust, fear and anger, relationship building is a necessary part of processing conflict (Lederach 1997). However, the dominant Western models of conflict resolution privilege problem solving and do not address relationships in ways that are adequate to sustain positive change in protracted conflict in divided societies (Lederach 1997). Second, I maintain that Western methods of processing conflict are often implemented in ways that are structurally violent in regard to Indigenous peoples. For instance, Western problem solving models neither acknowledge Indigenous worldview nor provide space for Indigenous peoples to function within their worldview (Walker 1998a). By silencing Indigenous worldview and conflict processing methodologies, the dominant models of Western conflict resolution continue the legacy of cultural imperialism in relation to Indigenous peoples in colonised societies.

Through my field research, I provide support for the role of elicitive approaches to processing conflict (Lederach 1995), which make explicit local knowledge regarding conflict and its transformation. I maintain that an analysis of *ethnopraxis*, of local knowledge regarding conflict and its processing (Avruch & Black 1991), provides ways of decreasing the structural violence of Western professional

techniques. In the findings chapters I demonstrate the ways in which elicitive approaches inform the discipline of conflict studies.

In this introductory chapter, I explain my background and interest in conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. I also present an overview of the main points that will be addressed in the literature review. In the latter sections of this chapter, I provide a preliminary overview of the methodology which I employed in my field research. In the final section I discuss the significance of conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, and provide an overview of the remaining chapters of this thesis.

Researcher Transparency: Identifying Myself as Researcher

Both Indigenist (Myer 1998a; Smith 1999) and emergent Western social science research (Fine 1994, 1998; Lincoln & Denzin 1998, p. 413) support transparency of the researcher within the research thesis, claiming that the beliefs and values of the researcher shape the research in significant ways. In Aboriginal Australian knowledge management in particular, *who* the researcher reveals herself/himself to be is the most important factor in eliciting meaningful and valid information (Williams 1997). Therefore, I have chosen to begin this introductory chapter by sharing my personal and cultural background, including the experiences which have shaped my interest in conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

I have also chosen to use the first person in my writing in order to more clearly support Indigenist conceptualisations of truth. By using the first person, I indicate that this thesis represents my view of truth in regard to transforming conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. Within an Indigenist paradigm, truth is expressed as a constantly changing co-creative process expressed through a multiplicity of individual's points of view (Silko 1998, p. 10). In Native science, 'truth is not a fixed point, but rather an ever-evolving point of balance, perpetually created and perpetually new' (Cajete 2000, p. 19). In Aboriginal Australian ontology, truth is a negotiated composite of individual's views, as expressed in the following quotation:

> ... the truth we have is a function not of who is closest to an understanding of objective reality, but of how sensitively we interpret

> our experience of the world, and whose voices are adequately heard (Christie 1992, p. 25).

I am an Indigenous woman, an American Indian of Cherokee and European descent. An integral part of my concern regarding alienation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is related to my family history.

I grew up in New Mexico and experienced, both within my family and the broader community, the alienation that exists between the lived realities of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in colonised countries. Three of my great-grandparents are Cherokee, one on my mother's side and two on my father's side. The other members of my family are of Anglo-Celtic descent. Many of my family stories involve conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous family members. These stories also describe the silencing of Indigenous culture and worldview that took place within my extended family. For example, my maternal Cherokee great grandmother shared with me the story of conflict between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of our family. Her father told her that anyone that married into our family was 'white'. No members of our family were allowed to claim Indian rights in relation to tribal status, land or religion. On my father's side of the family, my grandmother (after whom I was named), attended the Cherokee Theological Seminary in Tallequah, Oklahoma. However, due to the prejudice of my grandfather, she was forced to disguise her beliefs and practices as part of his religion, teaching them to her daughter in secret.

These stories illustrate the alienation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples that characterises the experience of many Indigenous peoples in colonised societies. The silencing of Indigenous culture and experience that occurred within my family reflects one of the central characteristics of colonisation that continues to provoke and exacerbate conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Although I was raised in a very Western environment, I continue to learn and participate in Cherokee ways of knowing and in evolving Cherokee culture. These experiences have been a process of conflict transformation within myself and my family. Thus, my personal experiences inform and shape my intent and my understanding as a researcher. Furthermore, my experiences continue to deepen my commitment to understanding ways of transforming conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

I also have a professional interest in transforming conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples which has been shaped by my experience as an educator in Southern New Mexico. In the public school system where I worked, and in the wider community, I see alienation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples mirrored in the relationships between the Mescalero Apache Nation and non-Indigenous communities. Myths and stereotypes regarding Indigenous peoples are frequently circulated and repeated within the wider community. Thus many of the interactions between the Apache people and the non-Indigenous community members are marked by generational mistrust and hostility.

In New Mexico I worked within the public schools both as a teacher and a program administrator. In the school districts where I worked the legacies of colonial impact upon the Mescalero peoples were never mentioned, much less addressed. Educational procedures for Indian students were the same as those for the non-Indigenous population. The impact of colonisation was never a factor in policy and decision making regarding the complex educational issues involving Mescalero Apache students and their families.

Thus, in addition to my personal interest, I developed a professional interest in addressing conflict and alienation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of our community. In 1995, I undertook a year of independent research at the University of Queensland during which I researched nonviolent methods of interacting with Indigenous peoples. It was during this year that I established personal and professional relationships within Australian Indigenous communities, which formed the network within which I have pursued this research.

I also continued my training in conflict resolution. In New Mexico in the Spring of 1996, I was trained in mediation techniques that were designated as 'peacemaking across cultures'. Our small working group on intercultural conflict resolution included people of Lakota, Navajo, Tewa and Cherokee heritage. Although the training involved people from many cultures, the techniques and processes were based on Western concepts of conflict and mediation. My experience of the workshop was mixed. The techniques that were taught seemed to be very effective in mainstream Western cultures. However, as presented, the techniques silenced Indigenous concepts of processing conflict. I was concerned about many of the underlying premises of the methodology in relation to Indigenous peoples, many of whom were represented in the mediation training program. In the

mediation training sessions, our group of Indigenous participants shared stories which encapsulated our worldview. When we were in small groups, at lunch and during breaks, we shared stories. Through these stories, we learned of each other's belief systems, as well as our practical and political problems in initiating conflict resolution programs within our communities and places of work. As Indigenous participants, we spoke openly of the importance of relationship, of spirituality, and the meaning of events we perceived in the natural world. What we spoke about in our unstructured time contrasted sharply with the formal techniques we were being taught. Although we were all interested in the professional techniques of conflict resolution that we were learning, I was beginning to formulate questions and concerns regarding its appropriateness for conflicts involving Indigenous peoples. Omitted from the training were issues regarding relationship, the natural world, of prayer and ceremony, as well as Indigenous ways of conceptualising conflict.

A great deal of damage has been done to Indigenous peoples by those of 'good intention' who implement Western techniques (DeLoria Jr. 1969, pp. 78-100). I wanted to be sure I did not unthinkingly implement Western procedures in ways that continued the imposition of Western ways of knowing. I wanted to be able to work within Indigenous communities with integrity, to acknowledge the complexities of colonisation and the ways in which Indigenous ways of knowing are silenced, and communicate across cultures in deeper and more meaningful ways. Thus I began this research as a doctoral thesis designed to develop a clearer understanding of transforming conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Cultural Issues within the Discipline of Conflict Studies

Cultural issues within the discipline of conflict studies have become an area of increasing concern (Avruch 1998; Avruch & Black 1990, 1991). However, most of the literature addressing culture and conflict processing emphasises cultural difference: whether Western models of conflict resolution need to be modified to accommodate cultural difference, or whether the techniques that currently exist accommodate cultural difference by elevating the proceedings to the level of a new, professional culture of conflict resolution. In contrast, very few professional writings analyse the differences in power that are evidenced by the privileging of Western conflict theories and methodologies and the silencing of Indigenous

conflict theories and methodologies. Kraybill (1996), Lederach (1995, 1997), Avruch (1998) and Avruch & Black (1990, 1991) are some of the prominent scholars in the discipline of conflict studies who not only consider the impact of cultural differences on conflict processing, but also acknowledge the power imbalances inherent in the Westernisation of conflict processing.

Culture and Power in Conflict Resolution

I maintain that the dominant Western models of conflict resolution continue the legacy of cultural imperialism, the imposition of Western culture based on its assumed superiority (Friere 1974, p.150). As Linda Tuwahi Smith (1999, pp. 19-24), prominent Maori Indigenist scholar explains, cultural imperialism provided the rationale for the colonisation of Indigenous peoples. Cultural imperialism supports the establishment of hierarchies of knowledge and power, with Western culture assuming the dominant position (Bedana 1996, pp.68-77). Through these processes, the dominant Western culture has been empowered, and to a great degree Indigenous cultures have been disempowered.

An example of cultural imperialism can be seen in the implementation of Western conflict resolution methodologies in conflicts involving colonised Indigenous peoples. In the dominant Western models of conflict resolution, acknowledgement and respect for cultural differences have been classed as interesting, but not essential to the successful resolution of conflict (Avruch & Black 1990, 1991). I maintain that the Western problem solving models of conflict resolution which claim to be culturally universal ignore Indigenous experience and worldview and therefore exacerbate the power imbalances between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. In response to these issues of cultural difference and power, I argue that transforming conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples requires methodology that acknowledges and respects the culture and worldview of Indigenous peoples.

Furthermore, I maintain that the imposition of Western methodologies on Indigenous people is a form of cultural violence. Johan Galtung, widely acknowledged as one of the founding scholars of peace research (Barash 1991, p. 9), defines cultural violence as the use of certain aspects of culture to legitimise forms of violence (Galtung 1996, p. 196). Where it occurs, cultural violence is deeply embedded in the consciousness of the people of a culture. Most often, people

are not aware that they are functioning in ways that promote dominance of a particular reality, but assume that is the way all humans behave, or should behave (Galtung 1996; Hall 1977, 1983). A general example of cultural violence in the context of this thesis is the use of Western science to marginalise Indigenous epistemologies. In Chapters Two and Five, I elaborate more fully the areas of cultural violence and cultural imperialism that impact on conflict processing in particular and on academic research in general.

This research thesis addresses the cultural violence inherent in Western methods of conflict resolution when they are uncritically implemented in conflicts involving Indigenous peoples. In the theory and practice of conflict resolution, Western science is often used to legitimate the silencing of Indigenous epistemologies. Aboriginal Australians, for example, have extensive conflict theories and methodologies (Behrendt 1995; Langton 1988; Williams 1985, 1987). However, the conflict processing most often implemented in the wider Australian community is based on Western problem solving models of mediation and conflict resolution (Beattie 1997; Grose 1995; Walker 1998a). Thus, Aboriginal Australians seeking professional support in resolving conflicts find their choices limited, with the predominant processes based on Western worldview. In contrast, conflict methodologies based on Indigenous culture and worldview are seldom implemented within mainstream institutions.

Cognitive Imperialism of Western Conflict Resolution

The dominant paradigm in Western practice of conflict resolution is Fisher and Ury's (1981) problem solving model, based on Western conceptualisations of conflict and its resolution. Fisher and Ury claim their methods are culturally universal (Avruch & Black 1990). In so doing, they posit cultural modifications and considerations to be non-essential in the process of resolving conflict (Avruch and Black 1991). Thus Fisher and Ury establish a hierarchy of knowledge related to conflict, with Western conceptualisations promoted as most effective in working across cultures. Nevertheless, Indigenous peoples have their own conceptualisations of what constitutes conflict and how it might be processed in ways that support the values and beliefs of the people involved. Such knowledge has been termed as *ethnoconflict theory* (Avruch & Black 1991).

In the Australian context, conflict scholars and practitioners express concerns over the silencing of Indigenous knowledge regarding conflict processes. These scholars argue that the Western models that are most often implemented are significantly different in regard to:

- underlying beliefs (Beattie 1997, pp. 57-69; Grose 1995, pp. 329-332),
- processes (Beattie 1997, pp. 57-69; Grose 1995, p. 333),
- relationship (Behrendt 1995, pp. 22, 64; Beattie 1997, pp. 63-66; Grose 1995, pp.329-331),
- and conceptualisations of time (Behrendt 1995, p. 22; Grose 1995, p. 333).

The continued privileging of Western conflict resolution methodology over Indigenous conflict processing perpetuates the processes of colonisation. One of the primary actions of colonisers is the suppression of other epistemologies. 'The West's belief in the universality of its culture has led it to impose its conceptions on others and to measure all progress in terms of its own achievements' (Camilleri 1994, p.24). Thus utilising Western methodologies of processing conflict without regard to the knowledge systems of Indigenous peoples perpetuates structural violence against Indigenous cultures.

In contrast to the culturally invasive processes of Westernisation, this thesis supports interconnections that link Indigenous ways of knowing with Western research and practice of conflict transformation. I maintain that acknowledging the knowledge systems of both cultures decreases the structural violence inherent in the imposition of Western epistemologies upon Indigenous peoples. In this thesis, I incorporate both Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians' local knowledge regarding conflict processing. I propose that the participants' stories form a critique of the formal Western knowledge most often heard in the discipline of conflict resolution and in social science research.

Worldview and Conflict Processing

> People's own biographies come to bear on the choices they make and the actions they perform...To understand conflict and its solution is to delve into the complexities of human experience and cultural process (Nordstrom 1995).

The literature on culture and conflict studies often incorporates inadequate conceptualisations of culture (Avruch & Black 1991, pp. 29-31). Conflict scholars Galtung (1990, 1996), Avruch (1998) and Avruch & Black (1990, 1991) argue that aspects of culture that are most crucial to understanding conflict are the deeper

aspects of culture concerning differences in worldview. Worldview has been defined as the aspects of culture that reside in the out-of-awareness level (Hall 1977, 1983) or the collective subconscious (Galtung 1996). Because worldview functions largely at the out-of-awareness level, many people are unaware that others share a different worldview in which reality is perceived quite differently. Ignoring these differences not only exacerbates existing conflicts, but can also be a source of conflict in and of itself (Hall 1983; Walker 1998a).

Worldview has also been labelled *deep culture* (Galtung 1996) and *primary level culture* (Hall 1977, 1983). Because worldview shapes perceptions of conflict and conflict methodology, it is an important consideration in the development and implementation of conflict processing methodology (Galtung 1990, 1996; Folger & Bush 1994). I maintain that conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples must involve approaches that take into consideration the *deep culture* of the people involved, the worldview that underlies the more visible aspects of cultural behaviour.

> The deep culture... of a civilisation obviously conditions not only the perception of conflict life-cycles, but also the actual behavior in conflict, with a major bearing on conflict transformation (Galtung 1996, p. 81).

Edward Hall (1977,1983) and Johann Galtung (1996) describe worldview as encompassing: perceptions of time, relationships, and what it means to be human, including how humans define and address conflict. Although the deeper structures of worldview often function in an out-of-awareness level, we can develop awareness of these deeper structures of worldview through holistic experiences in which we are immersed in another culture, find ourselves needing to explain our own culture, or participating in comparative studies (Hall 1977, 1983). In the findings chapters of this thesis, I discuss the ways in which both Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians develop a deeper awareness of each other's worldview through participating in conflict transformation.

Methodological Issues in Decolonising Research

In this section, I explore some of the issues of structural violence regarding the suppression of Indigenous epistemologies within formal academic research. An understanding of the ways in which Indigenous ways of knowing have been

silenced within academia is integral to an adequate analysis of conflict processing involving Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples.

Cultural Imperialism in Western Research

The rationalisation behind the colonisation of Indigenous peoples was European belief in racial and cultural superiority (Peat 1994; Ross 1996; Smith 1999). Notions of cultural superiority are still the rationale behind impositions of Western paradigms upon Indigenous people. Formalised Western ways of knowing are labelled *science* whereas formalised knowledge procedures in Indigenous societies are most often labelled *mythology* or *folklore* (Cajete 2000; Deloria Jr. 1969; Begay & Maryboy 1998, Peat 1994). In his seminal text *Blackfoot Physics,* research physicist F. David Peat (1994), challenges the assumed inferiority of Indigenous ways of knowing. A growing number of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars maintain that Indigenous science is equally valid as Western science (Cajete 2000; Meyer 1998a; Peat 1994; Rigney 1998). However, these scholars remain minority voices within the wider academic community. Throughout this thesis, I maintain that Western science is only one form of cultural argument (Forester 1996, p. 512), not inherently more valid than Indigenous ways of knowing except within Western definitions of epistemology (Christie 1992; Meyer 1998a). Nevertheless, members of Western cultures continue to 'proselitize their view of reality,' pressing Indigenous people to accept the superiority of Western epistemologies (Hall 1977, p.206).

I maintain that many of the practices of Western academic research are culturally violent in respect to Indigenous peoples. In the methodology section of this thesis, I critique Western academic research in relation to the silencing of Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies. Many research projects involving Indigenous people's concerns continue to be based on Western epistemologies and methodologies. However Indigenous scholars argue that a more valid approach would utilise Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies in addressing research topics regarding Indigenous peoples (Cajete 2000; Churchill 1996, p. 272; Begay & Maryboy 1998).

During the period of time in which I was designing my methodology, I came to understand that I needed to analyse cultural violence in the practice of formal academic research as well as within the practice of Western conflict processing. I

realised that if I were to critique the Westernisation of conflict methodologies and ignore the Westernisation of research methodologies, then my thesis would perpetuate the cultural violence of silencing Indigenous epistemologies. I believe that researchers must continually ask questions about the role their research plays in either challenging or perpetuating cultural violence in regard to the Westernisation of formal academic research.

Walking the Talk: Integrity of Process Within Research

Throughout the design and implementation of this research, I have endeavoured to implement Indigenous methodologies and to acknowledge and honour Indigenous epistemologies. However, I struggled to develop this approach. Most of the research methodologies that have been clearly articulated within academic texts are based on Western worldview and exclude experiences which many Indigenous scholars find to be integral parts of their experience. Prayer, ceremony, relationship with the natural world, dreams and intuition are seldom articulated within Western epistemologies and methodologies, yet they form integral parts of Indigenous ways of knowing. The following quote from another Cherokee author regarding the mismatch between Indigenous and Western knowledge systems reflects my own experience of formal academic research:

> I was centered and happy in my heritage until I went to college and began Western education in earnest. Everywhere I turned I found a "squared world," a society so compartmentalized that life, including my own, had no room to move around, to breathe. For twenty years I struggled against the Square World, but I unwittingly internalized it-tore my life web and stuffed the broken strands into the "boxes"...One quiet line marked the beginning of my healing: "No more will I follow any rule that splits my soul." Not for society or for government or for education or for any power whatsoever would I depart from the traditional teaching of my elders: "All of creation is one family, sacred" (Awaikta 1997, pp. 777).

Both Indigenist (Cajete 2000; Deloria Jr. 1995; Begay & Maryboy 1998; Myers 1998a) and emergent Western scholars (Fine 1994, 1998; Lincoln & Denzin 1998; Reason 1993) maintain that the ways in which we conduct research are as important, or perhaps even more important, than the research topic. Therefore, I have chosen to locate my research within Indigenist and emergent Western paradigms that recognise interconnectedness, spirituality, relationship and expanded conceptualisations of empirical data.

In this thesis, I challenge the universal applicability of Western conflict resolution methodology. I also critique the universality of Western methods of social science research, particularly in regard to research involving Indigenous people. Rather than situate my research solely within Western paradigms, as I was strongly advised to do, I have situated it within Indigenous paradigms and provided support from emergent Western paradigms. I implement methodology which I call *interconnected knowing* that privileges Indigenous epistemologies and is in turn supported by emergent Western epistemologies.

In the following section, I briefly discuss the methodology I used in this research. In Chapters Five through Seven, I describe in more detail the paradigm, methodology and methods incorporated in this research.

Interconnected Knowing

In designing methodology that would improve understanding of conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, I selected methods that acknowledge and respect both Indigenous and Western paradigms and epistemologies. I have developed an approach which I call *interconnected knowing* that links both Indigenous and Western ways of knowing. Belenky et al. (1986) uses the term *connected knowing* to refer to an approach that includes caring for others in ways that recognises interconnectedness. I have expanded on that term to encompass a conceptualisation of connectedness which includes relationship with people quite different from ourselves, as well as connectedness with the processes and beings of the natural world.

Interconnected Knowing : Use of Story

One of the major methodological processes of *interconnected knowing* is use of story as a research tool. Stories represent an epistemology based on presentational knowledge, which links experiential knowledge with conceptual knowledge (Heron 1992). In my research, I approach knowing about conflict transformation through stories that have previously been silenced within formal research on conflict resolution: the stories of Indigenous people involved in processes of conflict transformation as well as stories of non-Indigenous people working in solidarity with them. This research looks at what we can learn from the stories that live within

cultures (Silko 1986, pp.1-3), and from the deep culture or worldview that informs the knowledge and practice of story.

People's stories provide an insight into their deep culture, the worldview that underlies their behaviour. In Australia, the stories of non-Indigenous people who supported social justice for Indigenous peoples have also to a large extent been silenced rather than being integrated into historical analysis (Reynolds 1998). Therefore, learning about conflict through personal stories of the people involved in transforming conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples involves voicing largely silenced experience. Some Indigenous Australians' stories are embedded in historical documents that have, until recently, been largely ignored in the contemporary accounts of the history of democratic nations (Reynolds 1999). Indigenous stories are often dismissed as primitive, as folklore, or as common sense, not considered to be as valuable as knowledge from academic research and professional practice (Duryea and Potts 1993; Peat 1994).

The work of Indigenist scholars provides support for the use of story as a valid and effective research tool. Indigenous science is presentational (Whitt 1997, pp. 33-67) and holistic (Peat 1994; Reason 1993). Stories are also holistic, including many elements of experience which are often excluded from Western academic research. For example, stories often include expressions of spirituality and relationship with the natural world, thus providing more complete accounts of participants' experience.

Interconnected Knowing: Interconnectedness of all aspects of research

Another aspect of my approach of *interconnected knowing* is the unity of person, research problem, and method (Peile 1994; Reinharz 1979). In addition to clearly stating my personal background in regard to my research topic, I have also included an analysis of my self-reflexive observations as an integral part of this thesis. In Chapter Fourteen, I illuminate the interconnections between myself, the research question and the methodology by discussing the ways in which my experience as a researcher has been shaped by the data and by the research experience itself.

To address the centrality of interconnectedness to my research paradigm and methodology, I searched for Indigenous and Western paradigms and methods that could communicate across difference. In so doing, I do not intend to imply that

Indigenous science needs to be validated through Western science, rather that a dialogue between the two forms of science may be beneficial to both (Cajete 2000). To attempt to justify Indigenous ways of knowing through validation procedures of Western science would be another colonising practice, a bridge to assimilate Indigenous knowledge (Peat 1994, Whitt 1997). Instead, I have used paradigms and methodologies that communicate across cultural difference, proposing a synthesis of Indigenous and Western epistemologies.

Significance of intercultural conflict transformation

In the introductory section of this chapter, I discussed the significance of conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in my life. Many other Indigenous peoples describe the importance of transforming the conflict and alienation that exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in colonised societies. In addressing cognitive imperialism, Gregory Cajete, the author of *Native Science*, states that 'What all of us need at this time is a mutually beneficial bridge and dialogue between Indigenous and Western scientists and communities' (Cajete 2000, p. 7). Other Indigenous scholars make even stronger statements regarding the importance of transforming conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Carolyn Tawangyowma from the Sovereign Hopi Independent Nation maintains that 'Peace can come to the world only through an honest, non-violent relationship with the indigenous people, who are the caretakers of life' (Tawangyowma, cited in Suzuki & Knudson 1992, p. 237).

Non-Indigenous leaders around the world also maintain that increasing social justice and improving relationships with Indigenous peoples is of central concern in colonised countries. Within Australia, Prime Minister John Howard maintains that one of the major issues facing Australia is practical reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. His description of practical reconciliation, summarised in the following quotation, is similar to conflict transformation in that it involves improved relationships as well as positive social change:

> ...we can never feel satisfied, nor can we feel complete, until ...cohesion is extended throughout all sections of the community and specifically until indigenous Australians enjoy the same opportunities and the same plentiful lives as any other Australian (Howard 2000).

In an address regarding critical issues facing the international community, former United States President Bill Clinton cited intercultural alienation as one of the major concerns of the current era:

> The great irony of the turning of the millennium is that we have more modern options for technology and economic advance than ever before. But our major threat is the most primitive human failing – the fear of the other. And the sense that we can only breathe and function and matter if we are somehow freed of the necessity to associate with and deal with and, maybe under certain circumstances, subordinate our own opinions to the feelings of 'them'- people who are different from us' (Clinton 1999, p. 15).

Summary

In this Introductory Chapter, I have established my interest in sustainable conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in colonised societies. I have also established my interest in and position within the research design. Furthermore, I have introduced the issues of cultural imperialism and decolonisation that are central to this thesis. I have discussed the importance of Indigenist methodologies and local knowledge in decolonising research. In the final section of this chapter, I provide a brief overview of the other chapters of this thesis.

Overview of Thesis

In Chapter Two I review the literature in the discipline of conflict studies in relation to cultural difference. I also discuss concepts of deep culture or worldview, cultural invasion, and the role of language in cross-cultural research. I propose a definition of culture for use within this thesis. Finally, I draw conclusions regarding the imposition of Western methodologies on Indigenous peoples, developing an argument that nonviolent processing of conflict must involve acknowledgment and respect for Indigenous worldviews and epistemologies.

In Chapter Three I provide an overview of American Indian, First Nations, Native Hawaiian and Australian Aboriginal conflict processes. Although these Indigenous cultures vary in many aspects, they share many similarities in underlying worldview. The central characteristics of these Indigenous conflict processes are in stark contrast to the parameters of dominant Western models of conflict resolution. I analyse traditional Indigenous models that have been practised for centuries. I also analyse contemporary models that have been developed in

response to changes brought through colonisation. Through an analysis of North American and Australian Indigenous conflict methodologies, I identify four central characteristics of these Indigenous methodologies. I suggest that they are characterised by: a paradigm of interconnectedness; processes that involve a wide range of people and relationships; holistic experience involving intellect, body, mind, spirit and the natural world; and emphasis on restoration of harmony in ways that are sustainable over a long term period of time.

In Chapter Four, I provide a literature review of Western conflict processing. In the first part of the chapter, I analyse Western *problem-solving* approaches of conflict resolution. I conclude that the worldview that underlies these dominant Western approaches: is based on a mechanistic paradigm which is atomistic and analytical, emphasises technique rather than process, privileges the intellectual aspects of experience, and is based on linear, bounded conceptualisations of time. I argue that this worldview is dramatically different from the worldview underlying Indigenous approaches and that those differences must be respected when implementing conflict processing methods with Indigenous peoples.

In the second part of Chapter Four, I analyse the theory and practice of Western conflict *transformation*, which reflects similar characteristics as Indigenous processing of conflict. My analysis of Western scholars' research on conflict transformation highlights the principles of worldview that underlie their approach. I maintain that Western conflict *transformation* also reflects a worldview similar to that of Indigenist conflict processing and therefore holds promise for developing more effective dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars interested in sustainable conflict transformation.

Chapters Five through Seven are methodology chapters. In these chapters, I emphasise Indigenist approaches to research that centre Indigenous worldview and epistemologies. Furthermore, I analyse emergent Western methodologies in relation to their support for Indigenist research.

In Chapter Five, I review the literature on Indigenist research, discussing Eurocentric frameworks, cultural invasion and colonisation in relation to research involving Indigenous peoples. I then move to a review of the literature regarding Indigenist approaches of decolonising research. I identify the central characteristics of Indigenist research as: an acknowledgement of interconnectedness; an emphasis

on process and relationship; expanded definitions of data; and cyclical definitions of time.

I maintain that in conducting research with Indigenous peoples, researchers must consciously strive to implement methodology that acknowledges the deep culture of the people involved, as well as address the ways that Indigenous epistemologies have been suppressed within formal academic research. Furthermore, I maintain the importance of developing a dialogue between Indigenist research and emergent Western research, and I expand on that concept in Chapter Six.

In Chapter Six, I review the literature regarding Western scholars' support of the four basic principles that underlie Indigenist research methodologies. Some of these scholars recognise the similarities between their approach and that of Indigenous science. Others stress the importance of approaches that are characterised by these elements, yet remain unaware of the similarities between their epistemologies and those of Indigenous peoples.

In Chapter Six, I also compare the central characteristics of Peile's (1994) Creative Paradigm, American Indian/First Nations Paradigms and Australian Aboriginal Paradigms. I suggest that these paradigms seem to point to a metaparadigm which as yet has not been named, but has also been described within Chaos Theory (Briggs & Peat 1999), Theoretical Physics (Bohm 1980; Peat 1994) and emergent Western social science research (Peile 1994; Reason 1993).

In Chapter Seven, I describe and critique the methodology I implemented in this research project. I utilised methodology of *interconnected knowing* in which I provide theoretical support from both Indigenous and emergent Western approaches in relation to the central characteristics of interconnected knowing, which are: interconnectedness; an emphasis on process; holistic experience; and expanded concepts of time.

I also discuss validity issues in regard to my approach to *Indigenist* research, particularly my use of story. Furthermore, I suggest that my methodology is a form of conflict transformation in and of itself in that it presents participants' stories in ways that acknowledge the history of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, yet creates a synthesis that incorporates the values of both parties.

Chapters Eight through Fourteen illuminate the findings in regard to my field experiences with Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. The findings

highlight local knowledge and comprise what has been termed *ethnopraxis* (Avruch & Black 1991). In each of the findings chapters I discuss the findings' contribution to the discipline of conflict studies.

In Chapter Eight, I discuss participants' experience of developing understanding through seeing through others' eyes, increasing knowledge of the impact of historical events on current conflict, and acknowledging and respecting other realities. I contrast the participants' experience with the formalised practices of Western conflict processing.

In Chapter Nine, I discuss participants' experiences in understanding the emotional experience of others involved in the conflict. I also discuss the ways in which participants utilise the power of emotions in transforming conflict. I contrast their experience with Western research regarding the role of emotions in processing conflict.

In Chapter Ten, I discuss participants' experiences in developing relationships through respectful approach, recognising and honouring differences, and recognising and honouring commonalities. I then discuss the implications of these findings for the field of conflict studies. I suggest that Indigenist and Western transformative approaches privilege the development of relationship. In contrast, the dominant Western approaches privilege problem solving procedures designed to address individual interests and needs.

In Chapter Eleven, I discuss participants' experience in working together as equals, implementing positive social change at personal levels and systems levels. I contrast their experience with Western conflict resolution and mediation processes which are restricted to more immediate conflicts rather than long term systemic concerns. Both Indigenist and Western transformative approaches involve an extensive interconnected network of people and processes designed to develop an infrastructure that addresses long term systemic change.

In Chapter Twelve, I discuss participants' experience in addressing inequalities in regard to expression of worldview, as well as social and economic inequalities. I also discuss participants' experience of Australians' response to current attempts to redress inequalities through equal opportunity programs. I provide support for the concept that sustainable conflict transformation involves addressing social and economic inequalities that perpetuate and exacerbate conflict as well as addressing immediate conflicts.

In Chapter Thirteen, I discuss participants' experiences of personal transformation. These experiences include increased self-awareness, strengthened identity, and healing. I discuss the role of personal growth and healing in Indigenist and Western methods of processing conflict. Furthermore, I provide support for the concepts of personal growth and healing within conflict processes.

In Chapter Fourteen I discuss my experience of conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. I also discuss the role of reflexive analysis within research based on paradigms of interconnectedness. I maintain that reflexive data supports the conceptualisation of a co-creative paradigm in that it illuminates the ways in which both researcher and knowledge regarding the topic are changed.

In Chapter Fifteen, I summarise the limitations of dominant Western conflict resolution theory and methodology, particularly in its inability to deal with protracted conflicts between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in colonised countries. I conclude that looking to alternate epistemologies of the people involved in the conflict allows one to draw out effective processes for developing sustainable conflict transformation. I draw conclusions regarding effective, sustainable conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians and suggest the possibility of using similar methodology in other research projects.

CHAPTER TWO

CULTURAL IMPERIALISM IN WESTERN RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

All human endeavours are shaped by the culture within which they are enacted. Culture also shapes peoples' ways of dealing with conflict (Avruch & Black 1990, 1991; Galtung 1990, 1996). However, the dominant Western models of conflict resolution neither acknowledge nor accommodate differences in culture, claiming that their techniques 'cut across culture' (Avruch & Black 1990, 1991). I maintain that the hegemony of Western methods of processing conflict limits Indigenous peoples' opportunity to function within their own worldview and to implement their own methods of processing conflict.

In Chapter Three I discuss a few North American and Australian Indigenous methods of processing conflict, maintaining that the worldview underlying these Indigenous methodologies is vastly different from the dominant Western worldview. However, the dominant Western problem solving models do not adequately address differences in worldview, thereby exacerbating the power imbalances between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples that have been established through colonisation.

In the first section of this chapter, I discuss the ways in which worldview impacts upon conflict processing. In the second section, I discuss the effects of cultural invasion upon Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies. In the third section, I discuss the limitations of the English language within Indigenist research.

Worldview and Conflict Transformation

As discussed briefly in the introductory chapter, worldview represents the deeper levels of culture, the beliefs and values that shape all behaviour. Edward T. Hall has written extensively regarding the ways in which worldview shapes human behaviour. In the following quotation, he defines deep culture, or worldview, and explains the ways in which ignoring differences in worldview can exacerbate conflict. He describes worldview as:

> the underlying, hidden level of culture...a set of unspoken, implicit rules of behaviour and thought that controls everything we do. This hidden grammar defines the way in which people view the world,

> determines their values...as long as human beings and the societies they form continue to recognize only surface culture and avoid the underlying primary culture, nothing but unpredictable explosions and violence can result (Hall 1983, pp. 7-8).

A comparison of Western and Indigenous worldviews highlights differences which have implications for processing conflict. Central characteristics of the dominant Western worldview include:

- a unilinear, present-centered conception of time
- an analytic rather than holistic conception of epistemology
- a human-over-human conception of human relations
- a human-over-nature conception of relations to nature (Galtung 1990:313).

Central characteristics of American Indian/First Nations , Native Hawaiian and Aboriginal worldviews include:

- circular (or spiral) conception of time (Bopp et al. 1989; Meyer 1998a; Stanner 1979)
- a holistic conception of epistemology (Bopp et al. 1989; Meyer 1998a; Stanner 1979)
- non-hierarchical conception of human relations (Bopp et al. 1989; Meyer 1998a; Rose 1984)
- humans in relationship of care and responsibility with nature (Bopp et al. 1989; Meyer 1998a; Rose 1992).

Worldview influences all human interactions. The worldview of a group also incorporates 'the deep beliefs that people hold about what constitutes conflict, and how it might be resolved' (Galtung 1996, pp. 81-83). Therefore a meaningful analysis of conflict and conflict transformation must take into account the worldview of the people involved (Avruch & Black 1990, 1991; Folger & Bush 1994, pp. 7-15; Galtung 1996). The aspects of worldview listed in the previous paragraphs directly impact upon conflict processing (Galtung 1990, p. 313; 1996, pp. 81-85, 119-124). Indeed, understanding how conflict ideology is embedded within worldview is essential to an adequate analysis of conflict (Bush & Folger 1994, p. 9).

Many aspects of worldview are often 'hidden', operating at the subconscious level, and therefore not easily interpreted during intercultural interactions (Hall 1977; 1983, pp. 6-9). However, worldview can be brought to conscious reflection through a comparison with and awareness of our own and other's beliefs and

behaviours (Hall 1997, 1983; Galtung 1990, 1996). In order to bring a conscious awareness of the differences in worldview into my critical analysis of conflict processing, I provide a discussion of the central characteristics of the worldviews which underlie both Indigenous and Western methods of consensual conflict processing. In Chapters Three and Four, I provide a comparative analysis of the worldviews underlying Indigenous and Western approaches to processing conflict.

These differences in worldview shape conflict processing in significant ways. Communal societies, such as those found in Indigenous cultures, exhibit a collectivist approach to conflict and conflict resolution in which members keep each other informed on conflict situations (Barnes 1994). In collectivist cultures the primary purpose of resolving conflict is to bring harmony to the group. Thus, conflict is viewed holistically, not analytically, not broken into parts, but embedded in the networkings of the community (Beattie 1997; LeBaron 1995). In collectivist cultures processing of conflict emphasises the restoration of relationships within the network of interconnections that defines the community.

In contrast to communal societies, the majority of non-Indigenous Australians and United States citizens (the two non-Indigenous societies which feature in this thesis) tend to be individualistic (Hofstede 1984, p. 167). Non-communal societies tend to approach conflict analytically and require linear, deterministic explanations of existing conflicts. Thus their processing of conflict is more likely to emphasise analytical problem solving of discrete situations (Barnes 1994). The analytical, linear style of the dominant Western models of processing conflict contrast starkly with the cyclical and interconnected networks that characterise Indigenous conflict processing.

In writing about cultural issues within the processing of conflict, I primarily address cultural differences in worldview. The 'culture question' within the field of conflict studies has been a topic of concern for scholars and practitioners working across cultures (Avruch & Black 1990, 1991; Weiss 1987; Galtung 1990, 1996). In the literature on the Western discipline of conflict resolution, culture is often defined in 'thin, monodimensional ways' that limit culture to simplistic explanations of etiquette or easily observed differences (Avruch & Black 1991, p. 22). Avruch & Black (1991) maintain that simplistic definitions of culture have been the basis of justifiable criticism among scholars in conflict studies. If culture is defined as stylistic behaviour that can easily be understood and accommodated, then

conflict resolution methodology could possibly be developed in such a way as to be universally applicable to all cultures (Avruch & Black 1990, 1991). However, as discussed in Chapter One, a thicker, or richer, definition of culture includes worldview, the deep 'assumptions that individuals and groups hold about the world: shared common sense' (Avruch & Black 1991, p. 28). These deeper worldview aspects of culture (Hall 1977) are less amenable to being laid aside during negotiations, or as being cut through by skilfully crafted methodologies (Avruch & Black 1990, 1991).

In this thesis, I focus on cultural differences in the worldviews that underlie consensual conflict processing methodologies. In definitions of culture that incorporate worldview, culture is not amenable to being set aside during negotiation. Worldview is the reality from within which individuals operate, and differences in worldview must be understood and taken into account when processing conflict between people from different cultures (Galtung 1990, 1996).

Summary

In this section of Chapter Two, I have introduced the concept of worldview as an important consideration in intercultural conflict processing involving people from Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures. In that Indigenous worldviews have largely been silenced through Westernisation, issues of power must also be acknowledged and addressed within consensual conflict processing between these two groups. In the following section of this chapter, I further discuss power relations inherent in the Westernisation of conflict processing methodology.

Cultural Invasion

> Today one might say that cognitive imperialism has been added to the goals of conversion and assimilation of the dominant governing society (Begay & Maryboy 1998, p. 30).

The hegemony of Western epistemologies, which has occurred through the processes of colonisation, has largely silenced Indigenous worldview and conflict processing. Paolo Friere describes the cultural invasion inherent in colonisation as a process in which:

> the invaders penetrate the cultural context of another group, in disrespect of the latter's potentialities; they impose their own view of

> the world upon those they invade and inhibit the creativity of the invaded by curbing their expression (Friere 1974, pp.150-167).

The assumption that Western conflict resolution methodology is appropriate and effective for all cultures continues the practice of cultural invasion in which Indigenous peoples are denied the opportunity to address conflict in ways that respect the underlying principles and values of their worldview. Developing appropriate intercultural approaches to conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in colonised countries involves a conceptualisation of how the processes of colonisation have privileged Western worldview, as well as acknowledgement and accommodation of the worldviews of the people involved.

Silencing Indigenous worldviews has been and continues to be one of the major tools of colonisation. During European colonisation, Indigenous worldviews were considered to be heathen and primitive and were violently suppressed (Peat 1994; Reynolds 1999). Currently, when Indigenous worldviews are recognised by Western scientists and practitioners, they are still frequently considered to be primitive or superstitious, in need of development through Western scientific approaches (Cajete 2000; DeLoria Jr. 1995, p. 19; Begay & Maryboy 1998; Myer 1998a; Peat 1994).

Restrictions on the expression of Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies are examples of structural violence in that such actions deny Indigenous peoples the right to grow to their full potential (Galtung 1969). In Australia, although direct violence against Aborigines has been curtailed to a greater extent than earlier on in colonisation (Reynolds 1987, 1999), structural violence continues to operate in institutions and organisations as Aboriginal worldview and practice are silenced.

Recognising and respecting differences in worldview must involve more than academic consideration of exotic curiosities; worldview represents the lived realities of a people (Hall 1977, 1983). To deny Indigenous peoples the right to function within their worldview is to deny the reality of their experience. Therefore, to disengage from the processes of colonisation, it is mandatory for researchers and practitioners to acknowledge, respect and accommodate differences in worldview.

The worldviews underlying Indigenous and Western approaches to conflict are radically different. Stark contrasts exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous concepts of what it means to be human, how human relationships are construed, and how conflicts between humans are to be processed (LeBaron 1995; LeResche 1992;

Walker 1998a; 1999a, pp. 17-18, 24). These differences in worldview impact on conceptualisations of conflict as well as on appropriate ways of dealing with conflict (Avruch & Black 1990, 1991; Galtung 1996).

Indigenous approaches to conflict tend to be holistic, interconnected and cyclical in nature (Walker 1998a, pp. 199-204). Dominant Western approaches to conflict tend to be atomistic, individualistic and linear in nature (Avruch & Black 1990). Despite these differences, Western models of conflict resolution continue to be implemented in many Indigenous communities (Beattie 1997; Grose 1995; Yazzie 1995). Indigenous communities resist this intrusion, protesting that Western techniques are not culturally appropriate in many Indigenous settings (Beattie 1997; Grose 1995; Ross 1996;Yazzie 1995).

Disregarding the response of Indigenous peoples, practitioners of the dominant Western methodologies of processing conflict continue to promote Western problem solving approaches as *acultural*, transcending considerations of culture. In contrast, other scholars maintain that these models merely privilege Western culture (Avruch 1998; Avruch & Black 1990, 1991; Galtung 1990). In critiquing the hegemony of Western approaches to consensual conflict processing, Avruch and Black (1991, p. 39) remark that 'It is amazing how often the "universal" mode of conflict resolution turns out to be one which most perfectly expresses the theorist's values!'

Conflict Resolution training and practice in Queensland, Australia

In Queensland, Australia, where this study was carried out, Western methods of resolving conflict are often presented as innovative processes that fill a void in practice in Indigenous communities (Beattie 1997; Grose 1995). However, Aboriginal Australians have a history of formal procedures of processing conflict that precedes Western practice by centuries. Even in Australian Indigenous communities that have been severely impacted through colonisation, Indigenous beliefs and practices continue to shape the processing of conflict (Langton 1988; Tonkinson 1987; Williams 1985, 1987).

In contrast, Western conflict resolution is considered to be a relatively new discipline (Folger & Bush 1994). Western methods of resolving conflict have been developed within the last twenty years, primarily in response to concerns about the adverse effects of adjudication and legislation (Fisher & Ury 1981; Burton 1987,

1996, 1997). In line with this approach, the conflict resolution methods employed through the Queensland Justice Department continue to be based on a Western problem solving model that has been *indiginised*, modified to better fit within Indigenous Australian communities (Beattie 1997; Grose 1995). However, such an approach does not integrate the deep cultural aspects related to the conceptualisation of conflict, nor people's responsibilities in regard to processing conflict (Beattie 1997). Many Aboriginal Australians, for example, implement conflict processing which incorporates problems as integral parts of experience to be processed in a holistic manner, in contrast to Western problem solving techniques which 'see everything as a hurdle to overcome' (Beattie 1997, pp. 66-67). Futhermore, Aboriginal Australians conceptualise the role of facilitator as one of maintaining the networkings of the community, which contrasts with Western concepts of the facilitator as a disinterested, unbiased observer (Behrendt 1995).

Summary

In this section of Chapter Two, I have briefly discussed the hegemony of Western conflict processing and the silencing of Indigenous conflict processing. I maintain that nonviolent processing of conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples must acknowledge and accommodate Indigenous epistemologies and conflict methodologies which have been suppressed through the processes of colonisation.

There are also elements of structural violence in the language that is used to describe Indigenous conflict processing. In the next section of this chapter, I discuss some of the difficulties in the use of the English language in research involving colonised Indigenous peoples. I also clarify the meaning around some of the major terms I will be using throughout this thesis in an effort to address some of the concerns I raise regarding terminology and cultural imperialism.

Cultural Imperialism and English Language Usage

In this section, I discuss the difficulties of using the language of a colonising power to analyse methods of consensual conflict processing of colonised peoples. There are both issues of power and worldview involved in using the language of the coloniser to express the epistemologies and methodologies of colonised peoples. Many Indigenous scholars consider English to be a tool of colonisation and find

Indigenous people's use of English to be problematic (Harjo and Bird 1997, pp.19-31; Huggins 1998).

In the next chapter of this thesis, I discuss and analyse concepts from several American Indian, Native Hawaiian and Aboriginal Australian methodologies of conflict processing. I doing so, I continually find myself challenged by the use of a linear, noun-based language such as English to describe Indigenous concepts. Many Indigenous languages and worldviews are based on interconnected processes in constant flux, which are not easily expressed in the linear, noun-based structures of English (Little Bear, cited in Cajete 2000, p. 2000; Peat 1994, pp 237-238).

To address concerns regarding the use of English language to express Indigenous epistemologies, I have chosen to use English in an Indigenist manner. Although I use English words, I have integrated a cyclical expression in which concepts are revisited throughout this thesis. I revisit the themes of: interconnectedness; relationships and processes; holistic experience that acknowledges the sacred; and cyclical time. I also revisit concepts and stories that have been discussed in previous sections of the thesis. This cyclical use of English is evidenced in the work of other Indigenist scholars, notably Begay and Maryboy (1998), Cajete (2000), and Whelshula (1999). Cherokee scholar Marilou Awiakta (1993, pp. 34-36), provides a clear description of the cyclical use of English as an effective way to represent Indigenous epistemologies within a Western language. She compares her cyclical use of English to a doublewoven Cherokee basket. Just as Cherokee baskets are shaped by repeatedly weaving around fixed ribs which are centred and balanced, she shapes her text by weaving new information around central themes.

In developing understanding of Indigenous cultures, Western researchers also face the problem of accurate translation of Indigenous terminology. The same differences in worldview that impact processing of conflict also impact verbal expression. There are dramatic differences in the worldviews underlying Indigenous concepts and the English language. Some aspects of Indigenous worldview have no counterpart in Western worldview, therefore English has no exact terminology to explain those Indigenous concepts (Yazzie 1995).

Terminology is particularly problematic in cross-cultural analyses of consensual conflict processing. Western scholars of conflict resolution often use the same terms when considering Indigenous processes that they use when they are discussing

Western methodologies. However, conflict processing may be so different in different cultures that using identical terms to describe both Western and Indigenous process may result in professionals 'talking past each other' (Shook & Kwan 1987, p.48). Shook & Kwan (1987, p. 48) maintain that a better approach would be to develop more culturally inclusive terminology. To this end, I have adopted the term *consensual conflict processing* when speaking inclusively of Indigenous approaches and Western approaches. Thus the term consensual conflict processing refers to Indigenous peacemaking methodologies, Western problem solving models of conflict resolution and mediation, and Western conflict transformation.

As an example of the impact of language upon adequate understanding of conflict processing, Justice Robert Yazzie (1995), Supreme Court Justice of the Navajo Nation, describes the difficulty in finding a suitable English translation for the Navajo words related to the Navajo Justice and Harmony ceremony. Yazzie asserts that there are no words in English that provide an exact translation of Navajo concepts and terms. He also discusses the dangers he perceives in translating Navajo into English. Navajos perceive words to be powerful gifts from spirit ancestors, and in Navajo epistemology, mistranslation is conceptualised as more than a mere inaccuracy, it is believed to bring harm to the people involved (Yazzie 1995).

The cultural principles and values related to appropriate Indigenous ways of interacting with others are very different from Western ways. Furthermore, the ways of handling problems that arise within those interactions are so different that English words often do not accurately convey the meanings of the processes. Indigenous scholars assert that it takes many words and a great deal of careful consideration to attempt to express Indigenous worldviews through English (Awiakta 1993; Silko 1986; Yazzie 1995).

In Native American worldview, careful selection of words is considered to be part of the responsibility of being human (Armstrong 1998, p. 185; Silko 1986 pp.36-37). Therefore, as an American Indian scholar, I have chosen to address my selection of words within this thesis, and the challenges that such choices represent. In so doing, I hope in some measure to address the colonising power of the English language which has the power to limit and shape conceptualisation of Indigenous epistemologies within formal academic research.

Some Indigenous scholars are using their doctoral theses as sites of resistance to protest the disempowering effects of academic language upon Indigenous communities. For example, Martina Whelshula (1999) from the Colville Tribe has written her thesis using language and terminology that can be read and understood by all interested members of her Indigenous community. Academic language is often so obtuse that Indigenous peoples are prevented from using formal academic research in ways that might benefit their communities (Begay & Maryboy 1998; Smith 1999; Whelshula 1999). Furthermore, the linear discourse of most Western research obscures the interconnections so necessary to the understanding of Indigenous concepts (Awiakta 1993).

Academic language fails to communicate with many Indigenous people who are capable of understanding the concepts but are alienated by academic terminology. Because of the privileged position of dominant forms of English in relation to Indigenous cultures, many Indigenous scholars feel uncomfortable about using the language of Western academic research (Huggins 1998, pp. 71-77; Rigney 1998).

In this thesis, I have made a decision to use academic terminology in order to support the development of sites of resistance in formal research within which Indigenous epistemologies may be voiced. Many Indigenous (Cajete 2000; Churchill 1996; Begay & Maryboy 1998, Whelshula 1999) and non-Indigenous scholars (Peat 1994; Stanfield 1994; Reason 1998) also support the development of space for Indigenous epistemologies within formal academic research. I acknowledge the constraints that my use of formal academic English has placed on the ways in which my research may inform other Indigenous peoples. However, I did not want to omit consideration of Indigenous methods of transforming conflict because I did not have language adequate for the task. I believe that to do so would be for me to remain complicit in the silencing of Indigenous knowledge. Instead, I have chosen to accept the current limitations of written expression within a doctoral thesis. Another way in which I attempt to decrease the structural violence of academic English within this thesis is to include Indigenous people's explanations of their English translations of Indigenous terminology. In the following section, I discuss Indigenous scholars use of the word *traditional*.

Problematic terminology in cross cultural conflict studies

Terminology may be used in ways that either support or reduce cultural imperialism in formal academic research. The term *traditional*, which occurs frequently in the literature on Indigenous conflict processing, can be used in both dis-empowering and empowering ways. This term is often problematic in that is used to essentialise Indigenous cultures, to inhibit their evolution and creative change, to insist they remain as they are considered to have been in some past state (Smith 1999; Deloria Jr. 1969).

The word *traditional* is sometimes used by Western scholars to restrain Indigenous cultures within a static state: Western scholars often describe Indigenous people as authentic only if they practice what Western scholars consider to be traditional methods (Smith 1999). Researchers often describe modern and/or urban Indigenous people as no longer having a traditional culture, and therefore no longer authentically Indigenous. Many Western scholars use *traditional* in a manner that indicates Indigenous cultures and methods must remain static in order to maintain their authenticity (Deloria Jr. 1969; Smith 1996).

I maintain that it is structurally violent to accept growth and change as healthy within Western science and methodologies, but to regard change within Indigenous science an methodologies as a negation of authenticity. The concept that cultural change totally obliterates tradition is certainly not acceptable in mainstream Western culture. Newer variations in Western methodologies are frequently considered to be innovations. Rather than being automatically considered invalid because they have changed, they are both critiqued and admired. They are not automatically judged as 'not traditionally Western' because they have been modified.

In contrast to Western essentialising usage of the word *traditional,* many Indigenous authors use *traditional* to indicate the richness and complexity of the interconnections between Indigenous methodologies as they were practised in the past and as they continue today. In Indigenous writings, *traditional* often indicates interconnections with cultural beliefs and values. *Traditional* does not indicate an unchanging way of doing things. Leslie Marmon Silko (1986, p. 126), of the Laguna Pueblo, describes a Native American conceptualisation of traditional that encompasses change:

> (Some) people nowadays have an idea about the ceremonies. They think the ceremonies must be performed exactly as they have always been done, maybe because one slip-up or mistake and the whole ceremony must be stopped...But long ago when the people were given these ceremonies, the changing began, if only in the aging of the yellow gourd rattle or the shrinking of the skin around the eagle's claw, if only in the different voices from generation to generation, singing the chants. You see, in many ways, the ceremonies have always been changing.

Members of the Iroquois confederacy also describe their continuing traditional practices as embracing growth and change:

> We live a contemporary lifestyle and are not frozen in the past. While we still maintain practices that are rooted in the past, we apply those practices to define our place in the modern world. Our traditional culture is forward thinking, to assure our long term survival. Our culture allows us to deal with the realities of the modern world, not by embracing any new fad, but continuing to absorb new traditions on our own terms (Ten Important Points 1999).

In the next chapter on Indigenous conflict processing, I refer to traditional methods of processing conflict. In so doing, I am referring to methods that are based on Indigenous culture and worldview. I am not referring to processes that remain totally unchanged through time. In this thesis, I use the concept of *traditional* as it is defined in the previous two passages, as maintaining the beliefs and values of a people, but changing in ways which Indigenous peoples consider appropriate to accommodate current situations.

Summary

The challenge of finding English words that adequately communicate across cultures and that do not privilege Western worldview continues to be a complex issue in research involving intercultural issues. I have implemented this research using the English language and to a great extent my findings are coloured by this constraint. A separate doctoral thesis would be needed to adequately address the use of English in Indigenist research. Nevertheless, I hope that acknowledging this as a concern will alert readers to the limitations of this text.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed some of the issues regarding the cultural imperialism evidenced by the hegemony of Western research and practice, both in the discipline of conflict studies and in formal academic research. I have also

discussed the difficulties that Indigenist researchers find in the use of the English language to represent Indigenous concepts that have been silenced through the processes of colonisation.

Furthermore, I have established the importance of acknowledging and respecting differences in the worldviews that underlie conflict processing methods. In Chapter Three, I discuss traditional Indigenous approaches to processing conflict in regard to underlying principles of worldview. I also provide a brief discussion of some Native American, First Nations, Native Hawaiian and Aboriginal Australian approaches to processing conflict. Within this thesis, I do not attempt an in-depth analysis of these Indigenous methodologies. Such a consideration of even one Indigenous approach to processing conflict would require an entire thesis devoted solely to that topic. However, what I propose to do in the next chapter is to develop a deeper understanding of the aspects of worldview that underpin these Indigenous approaches to processing conflict. I maintain that an understanding of the differences between Indigenous worldviews and the dominant Western worldview is essential in developing a critique of the cultural violence inherent in dominant Western approaches to processing conflict.

CHAPTER THREE

HONOURING THE ANCESTORS: LITERATURE REVIEW OF INDIGENOUS CONFLICT PROCESSING

Introduction

In this chapter I provide an analysis of four Indigenous methods of processing conflict from American Indian, First Nations, Native Hawaiian and Australian Aboriginal peoples. Although these methodologies are drawn from different Indigenous cultures, they share many similarities in regard to underlying principles of worldview. Some of these methodologies are traditional models that have been practised for centuries. Others are contemporary models that have been developed in response to changes brought through colonisation.

Traditional Indigenous methods of processing conflict precede the Western discipline of conflict resolution by centuries, yet their contributions are scarcely recognised within the discipline of conflict studies (Beattie 1997, pp. 63-64). For example, the American Indian Nation of Tsalagi people, commonly known as Cherokee, have a long history of conflict transformation and peacemaking. In 1730 Attakullakulla, chief of the Cherokee Nation, successfully negotiated a treaty with the King of England regarding political relationships between the Cherokee and European colonists (Kelly 1978, pp. 3-29). Attakullakulla's niece, Nanyehi, served as leader of the Cherokee nation for fifty years, and became well known for her efforts to resolve conflicts between Cherokees and Europeans (Awiakta 1993, pp. 92-100; Ellington 1994).

Indigenous approaches to processing conflict have informed the philosophy, theory and political policy of Western democracies. For example, some scholars maintain that the basic principles of the Great Law of Peace of the Haudenosaunee formed the basis of the United States Constitution (Great Law of Peace 1999; Horn 1996, pp. 17-18; LeBaron 1995, p. 1; Peterson 1990, pp. 62-89). Other Indigenous scholars such as Awiakta (1993), Deloria Jr. (1999) and Gunn-Allen (1992, pp. 217-221) argue that the principles that underlie Indigenous worldview influenced the spread of democratic principles throughout Europe. They discuss the writings of European scholars and philosophers who visited the Americas, observed Indigenous nations which promoted gender equality, tolerance and democratic principles, and

returned to Europe to further develop those ideals in relation to their own countries. Nevertheless, few Western scholars acknowledge the contribution of Indigenous theory and practice to the discipline of conflict resolution, continuing to implement methodologies based on Western worldview.

In acknowledging the contributions of Indigenous cultures, it is important not to romanticise their traditional approaches (LeBaron 1995, pp. 1-4). Glamorising traditional cultures can often be an essentialising tactic which freezes their growth , conceptually consigning them to an unchanging past (Beattie 1997, pp. 62-97). Although the Indigenous conflict processing methods in this chapter may seem exotic because they are relatively unknown within the wider academic community, they represent Indigenous peoples' continually growing and changing cultural responses to conflict. Rather than conceptualising these models as methods of 'noble savages', I am endeavouring to illuminate the extensive theory and practice of Indigenous consensual processing of conflict that is often unrecognised within the Western discipline of conflict studies. I also analyse these approaches in order to contrast the worldviews underlying Indigenous and Western consensual conflict processing.

In the following section of this chapter, I discuss four Traditional Indigenous approaches to consensual conflict processing in relation to their underlying principles of worldview. These represent the smallest fraction of existing Indigenous methods of processing conflict, or 'peacemaking,' as there are 517 forms of American Indian conflict processing in the United States alone (LeResche 1993, p. 321). The models of conflict processing, or peacemaking, which I analyse in the following section are: Tsaligi (Cherokee) **Talking Circle**, Native Hawaiian **Ho'oponopono**, Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) **Great Law of Peace**, and the Navajo **Justice and Harmony Ceremony.**

In the second section of this chapter, I analyse the worldview underlying a contemporary Indigenous model of consensual conflict processing. Then in the final section, I analyse Aboriginal Australian methods of consensual processing of conflict, comparing the underlying worldview with that of Native Americans and Native Hawaiians.

Traditional Indigenous Approaches to Processing Conflict

Many Indigenous peoples in North America and Hawaii practice forms of conflict processing that have continued for centuries. For example, the Haudenosaunee, the people of the Long House, known as the Iroquois Confederacy, continue to practice their consensual approach to processing conflict (Kickingbird & Kickingbird 1987). Their approach to dealing with conflict is embedded within The Great Law of Peace. The purpose of their peacemaking methodology expressed through the Grand Council is the restoration of harmony through the balance of righteousness, health and power (Great Law of Peace 1999).

Likewise, Cherokees practice a traditional form of conflict transformation through the **Talking Circle** (Garrett 1998, pp. 80-83). The Cherokee word for the transformation of conflict is ***to hi ge se s di,*** most accurately translated as 'making peace' (Awiakta 1993, p. 288). In ***gadugi,*** community meetings, members practice consensual problem solving in sessions designed to heal relationships as well as solve problems (Awiakta 1993, p. 289; Garrett 1998, pp. 80-83).

Ho'oponopono is a traditional Native Hawaiian approach to processing conflict that continues to be practised today. **Ho'oponopono** is a holistic approach that includes mental, physical, spiritual and natural aspects of the participant's lives (Boggs & Chun 1990; Shook & Kwan 1987). **Ho'oponopono** means 'setting to right' and its purpose is to restore harmony to the family group as well as to prevent more serious conflict from occurring (Boggs & Chun 1990, p. 123). **Ho'oponopono** has been practised for centuries, although there was a period during colonisation when it was restricted due to the influence of Christian missionaries (Boggs & Chun 1990, p. 125).

The Navajo **Justice and Harmony Ceremony (Hozhooji Naat'aanii)** is a traditional form of peacemaking that is still practiced today (Yazzie 1995; Bluehouse & Zion 1993). The ceremony is structured in ways that heal conflict by restoring balance to the community through: prayer, expression of emotions, traditional teachings, discussion, consensus, and reconciliation (Yazzie 1995, p. 10). The entire process of the Harmony ceremony is designed to balance individual rights and group needs, which are seen as interconnected (Yazzie 1995, p. 16).

Worldview of Native American and Native Hawaiian Consensual Conflict Processing

In this section, I elaborate on four characteristics of the worldview underlying these Indigenous approaches to processing conflict. Through an analysis of the previously described methods of consensual conflict processing, I propose that these Indigenous models of consensual conflict processing are characterised by:

- paradigms of interconnectedness
- emphasis on process and relationships
- holistic experience
- expanded conceptualisations of time.

Worldview of Indigenous Methodologies: A Paradigm of Interconnectedness

> Traditionally, Native people approached the world from a cosmo-centric perspective which emphasized the interrelatedness of everything in the world (LeBaron 1995, p. 1).

The Indigenous models of processing conflict analysed in this chapter are all based on a paradigm of interconnectedness. A few examples drawn from the methods will provide an understanding of ways in which interconnections are central to processing conflict in these approaches.

In the Tsalagi **Talking Circle**, all of the participants are conceptualised as being connected to each other and to all things. The physical circle in which they are seated depicts their worldview of reality as a web of interconnections (Garrett 1998). Within the circle, all the participants sit in positions of equality, thus no hierarchy is established and the connections are circular rather than linear.

Likewise, the Native Hawaiians peacemaking process called **Ho'oponopono** is based on concepts of interconnectedness. The metaphors which Native Hawaiians use in this process reflect a worldview that emphasises interconnections. For example, Native Hawaiians use the metaphor 'all jam up' when speaking informally about conflict (Shook & Kwan 1987, p. 10). Shook and Kwan (1987, pp. 10-12) further explain that the process of **Ho'oponopono** straightens the way by restoring relationships and correcting behaviour. These metaphors of entanglement and disentanglement address the flow of interconnections that form the web of Pacific societies' epistemologies (Watson-Gegeo & White 1990).

Likewise, in Haudenosaunee worldview, an individual is defined as part of a network of relationships. For example, in the Haudenosaunee Grand Council there is no hierarchy. Each child, woman and man is allowed to speak until consensus is reached. Then the consensus is relayed to the Clan Mother who shares it with their Chief. In the Grand Council, the Chief speaks the consensual message. In Haudenosaunee worldview, interconnectedness is reflected in this group power acquired through the unity of heart, mind and spirit of all of the members (How Does the Grand Council Work 1999).

In the Navajo **Justice and Harmony Ceremony**, interconnectedness may be seen in the unified conceptualisation of religious and secular aspects of the conflict (Bluehouse & Zion 1993, pp. 331-334). 'At the conclusion of the... ceremony, individuals are again in their proper place, functioning harmoniously and in beauty with everything else' (Bluehouse & Zion 1993, pp. 332).

Worldview of Indigenous Methodologies: Emphasis on Processes and Relationships

The Indigenous approaches to consensual processing of conflict which are discussed in this chapter emphasise process and relationships rather than technique. Indeed, Native Science as a whole is characterised by an ever-changing flux of process and relationship (Cajete 2000).

Emphasis on Process

> A (Native American) peacemaking process tends to be viewed as a "guiding process," a relationship healing journey to assist people in returning to harmony (LeResche 1993, p. 321).

The Navajo **Harmony Ceremony** emphasises co-creative processes, as evidenced by the language used within the ceremony. Specific words that describe changes within the peacemaking ceremony denote process as movement toward a state of balance. For example, the leader of the ceremony asks if the process is moving toward harmony (**hozhooji**), or moving toward disharmony (**hashkeeji**) (Bluehouse & Zion 1993, p. 330). These expressions illuminate a worldview founded on processes of movement and flux rather than linear cause and effect.

Emphasis on Relationships

The Indigenous approaches discussed in this chapter emphasise relationships by involving many family and community members, including extended family members, friends, and ancestors who are not longer present in bodily form.

> (Native American peacemaking)... includes the widest circle of people concerned, each having a voice if they wish, not just the immediate "parties" and their representatives (LeResche 1993, p. 321).

Furthermore, relationships with processes and beings of the natural world are also integrated within these Indigenous approaches to processing conflict (Huber 1993; Shook & Kwan 1987).

The choice of facilitators also reflects an emphasis on relationships. Rather than selecting facilitators based on perceived impartiality and unbiasedness, which is the dominant consideration in most Western conflict resolution, the Indigenous processes analysed in this chapter involve facilitators who are well known to the participants and who are well versed in community beliefs, values and history. The following discussion of these processes reflects an emphasis on relationship as an important factor in Indigenous consensual processing of conflict.

In Hawaiian **Ho'oponopono**, the leader of the session is a respected elder chosen because of *mana,* or personal power (Shook & Kwan 1987, pp. 126-131). The faciliator may be family elders (***hanau mua)***, specialists (***kahuna***) or healers (***ho'ola***). The leader uses rituals such as prayer to establish connections between family members.

In the Navajo Harmony Ceremony, the process is facilitated by a wise elder (Bluehouse & Zion 1993; Yazzie 1995, p. 10). The ***naat'aani*** reinforces the traditional values and teachings of the Navajo people. During the ceremony, the ***naat'aani,*** sometimes referred to as the peacemaker, teaches and guides participants to traditional Navajo values. The leader uses stories, prayers, and ceremonies that educate participants as to how to proceed in harmony with traditional values (Yazzie 1995, p. 16).

The Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace reflects the importance of maintaining balance in relationships. Therefore, both women and men hold positions of power to ensure balance and equality among the people (Lyons, quoted in Awiakta 1993, pp. 169-273). In the Grand Council, the Clan Mothers are present to ensure that the

decisions of the Clan Chiefs correspond to the Great Law of Peace and continue to support the traditional belief system (Lyons, cited in Awiakta 1983, pp. 269-273).

The Indigenous models of processing conflict discussed in this chapter all privilege restoring relationships rather than solving specific problems. For example, the Navajo **Justice and Harmony Ceremony** is designed to enable the participants to discover the underlying causes of the conflict in ways that maintain and restore relationships. The process solves problems through consensus and heals alienation by making the offender feel part of the group (Bluehouse & Zion 1993; Yazzie 1995). 'The relationship is central...The method is effective because it focuses on the parties with goodwill to reintegrate them into their community' (Bluehouse & Zion 1993, p. 334).

In the Navajo **Justice and Harmony Ceremony**, maintaining and developing harmonious relationships are considered more important than solving the particular problems between people (Yazzie 1995; Bluehouse & Zion 1993). A consideration of some of the major Navajo terminology reflects their emphasis on relationships. For example, Chief Justice Robert Yazzie (1995, p.8) translates the term ***k'e*** as meaning 'that the most important thing in life is to be yourself in good relation to others'. Bluehouse and Zion (1993, pp. 328-334), Navajo lawyers, explain the meaning of ***k'e*** as encompassing both the respect and the solidarity needed to develop consensus among the parties in conflict. Therefore, verbal expression is conducted in a respectful manner designed to restore relationships or build new ones.

Likewise, Native Hawaiian **Ho'oponopono** privileges harmonious relationships above problem solving. **Ho'oponopono** is based on a relational worldview in which a human is defined as 'a self embedded in family relationships that include manifestations and relationships in the spiritual and natural world' (Shook & Kwan 1987, p. 9). This metaphor of embeddedness illustrates the principle of reciprocity represented as a web of mutual obligations. In a web metaphor, conflict has implications not only for the individuals directly involved in the dispute, but for the community as a whole (Shook & Kwan 1987, pp. 6-11).

Within the Indigenous conflict processing discussed in this chapter, speech is shaped in ways that enhance and maintain relationships. Rather than an uncontrolled emotive, purging style of speech, participants are reminded that their words are powerful and that they affect relationships. Therefore, participants are

reminded to speak respectfully after a full consideration of their words. For example, Haudenosaunee consensual conflict processing reminds participants to speak respectfully, mindful of their obligations to their relations (How Does the Grand Council Work 1999).

In many forms of Indigenous conflict processing, silence is considered to be one way of responding respectfully in order to maintain relationships. For example, reflective silence is encouraged in the Cherokee **Talking Circle** (Garrett 1998). This contrasts with Western conflict processing, during which silence is often regarded as refusal to cooperate (Eades 1991). In many Indigenous cultures, silence is seen to lessen conflict and participants do not consider it obligatory to answer direct questions (Ross 1996, p. 109-110). In many Indigenous methods of processing conflict, silence is seen to lessen conflict because answers and solutions may arise naturally when people have time to reflect. During reflection participants consider what they might have to say about a matter as well as the most respectful way to express their point of view (Garrett 1998; Huber 1993).

In **Ho'oponopono** silence is also considered a natural and necessary part of reflecting and coming to understanding. Participants are encouraged to engage in silence while considering their responses in regard to traditional teachings and relationship obligations (Shook & Kwan 1987, p. 363).

Within the Cherokee **Talking Circle** expression is much more varied than that found within Western models of conflict resolution. Responses regarding the conflict range from silence to songs, prayers, stories, and dialogues. Respectful choices of expression are encouraged and responses are shaped by the use of a talking stick which indicates who is allowed to speak at a particular time (Garrett 1998, pp. 80-83). The talking stick also encourages the participants to speak from and listen from the heart rather than from the mind alone (Garrett 1998; Huber 1993).

Native Americans involved in the use of the talking stick state that the time spent in waiting for one's turn to speak may bring about new understanding as listeners have time to reflect and on others' points of view. They maintain that individual's reflections during periods of silence often assist in transformation of the conflict and healing of the alienation brought about by the conflict (Garrett 1998; Huber 1993).

Holistic Experience in Indigenous Conflict Processing

The Indigenous approaches to conflict processing that are analysed in this chapter reflect holistic conceptualisations of human experience in that they integrate intellectual, emotional and spiritual experience. In writing of Native American approaches to processing conflict, Diane LeResche explains the holistic approach of American Indians:

> Sacred justice is going beyond the techniques for handling conflicts; it involves going to the heart. It includes speaking from the heart, from one's feelings. It is giving advice, reminding people of their responsibilities to one another. It is helping them reconnect with the higher spirits, or seeing the conflict in relation to the higher purposes. It is helping people ease, move beyond, transform the intense hurtful emotions like anger into reorienting and reuniting with that which is more important than the issues of the conflict. Sacred justice is found when the importance of restoring understanding and balance to relationships has been acknowledged. It almost always includes apologies and forgiveness. It is people working together, looking for mutual benefits for all in their widest circle (LeResche 1993, p. 322).

In the following subsections, I elaborate more fully on these aspects of Indigenous conflict processing, providing examples of experience involving emotions and spirituality .

Holistic Experience in Processing Conflict: Emotions

Within the Indigenous conflict processing covered in this chapter, emotional expression is encouraged as an integral part of the process. In this section I discuss the ways in which these Indigenous approaches to processing conflict encourage the participants to express emotions in ways that restore and maintain group harmony.

In the Navajo **Justice and Harmony Ceremony**, emotional expression is a central characteristic. This traditional form of processing conflict emphasises the role of emotion in bringing balance to the process (Yazzie 1995). Participants are encouraged to consider the ways in which they express their emotions. For example, openly hostile expressions of anger are not welcomed. The Navajo peacemakers say, 'Watch your words. Watch what you say' (Yazzie 1995, p.11).

Appropriate responses during **Ho'oponopono** are also holistic, stressing both emotion and intellect. The processes of **Ho'oponopono** include sincerity, 'talking from the guts', a willingness to express emotional truth as well as the facts regarding the conflict (Boggs & Chun 1990, p. 132).

Under the **Great Law of Peace**, each individual is encouraged to treat others as equals, with respect. Thus in Haudenosaunee consensual processing of conflict, each person is expected to express emotions in ways that do not foster resentment or hatred. Participants are to use health of body, mind and spirit to promote well being between people and nations (Great Law of Peace 1999).

Holistic Experience in Processing Conflict: Spiritual aspects

> At its core, Native American peacemaking is inherently spiritual; it speaks to the connectedness of all things; it focuses on unity, on harmony, on balancing the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical dimensions of a community of people (LeResche 1993, p. 321).

Haudenosaunee processing of conflict openly addresses the spiritual aspects of human experience. For example, their process involves the development of individual power called *orenda* which is the basic spiritual power of each person. The Haudenosaunee state that the Great Law of Peace depends on the individual development of each person's *orenda* as it relates to the well being of the community, the nation and the confederacy (Great Law of Peace 1999).

The Navajo **Justice and Harmony Ceremony** also involves spiritual aspects of processing conflict. The ceremony involves prayer, ceremony and ritual that honour Navajo spiritual beliefs and thus increase the receptiveness of the people involved. In describing the importance of the spiritual aspects of the ceremony, Chief Justice Yazzie explains:

> The Indian world is not solely a material world. There is a spiritual dimension to life. Many Indian groups are not secular societies; they do not separate spirituality from everyday life. In general Indian belief, the people of the spirit world are very much a part of daily life; they actively participate in it. (Yazzie 1995, p. 10).

Likewise, the Cherokee describe their traditional processing of conflict as holistic, integrating both civic and spiritual aspects of participants' experience (Awiakta 1993, Garrett 1998).

In **Ho'oponopono** conceptualisations of relationships that influence conflict processing include those relatives who have died and may participate in spirit form. For example, in Native Hawaiian worldview the concept of family includes *amakua,* spirit relations who remain senior members of clans (Shook and Kwan 1987, p. 7). Likewise, ancestors are often invoked in the Cherokee **Talking Circle**

(Garrett 1998), the Navajo **Justice and Harmony Ceremony** (Bluehouse & Zion 1993; Yazzie 1995), and the Haudenosaunee **Grand Council** (How Does the Grand Council Work 1999).

Expanded Concepts of Time: Restoration of Sustainable Harmony

The Indigenous approaches to processing conflict discussed in this chapter reflect a worldview of time that is more expansive than the dominant Western linear conceptualisation of time. Firstly, time is conceived as cyclical rather than linear; past, present and future co-exist. Secondly, time is measured according the meaning that is held within the web of interconnections that make up Indigenous worldview. Lastly, meaningful measures of time extend to include members of previous and future generations. Within these conceptualisations of time, conflict processing is designed to implement long term sustainable change.

In Haudenosaunee conflict methodology, time is viewed holistically as it relates to all the people, the natural world, and the social processes of the community. Consideration is taken of what needs to be done to restore harmony to the individuals involved and to the community as a whole. Rather than terminating sessions based on clock or calendar time, sufficient time is allowed to reach consensus (How Does the Grand Council Work 1999). Likewise, participants in the **Cherokee Talking Circle** seek to resolve problems in ways that restore long term harmony and balance within relationships and the community at large (Garrett 1998).

The **Justice and Harmony Ceremony** is designed to develop understanding of the underlying causes of the conflict under consideration. In Navajo worldview, to get rid of disharmony, one must identify it, bring it out into the open and examine it (Yazzie 1995, p.14). This process may involve going back to consider the previous generations:

> Sometimes people will go back for generations to describe some ancient wrongdoing and a history of relationships. It is proper, because it gets to the bottom of things (Yazzie 1995, pp. 11-12).

Thus the processes of the Harmony Ceremony enable the participants to discover the underlying causes of the conflict and address it in ways that sustain long term change (Bluehouse & Zion 1993; Yazzie 1995).

Haudenosaunee approach to processing conflict is designed to develop consensual agreements that both improve the conflict and restore relationships. (Great Law of Peace 1999). Their procedures seek to make explicit the underlying causes of disharmony and allow the people involved to make the necessary changes to restore balance to the web of community for seven generations.

Within these Indigenous processes, the language used within the ceremonies reflects the emphasis on sustaining harmony over long periods of time. For example, in **Ho'oponopono**, once the conflict has been transformed, the participants are instructed to avoid future discussion of the problem. This process of formally closing the conflict off from discussion is named ***oki*** and signifies a cutting off, sealing up and healing of the conflict (Boggs & Chun 1990, p. 132; Shook & Kwan 1987, p. 16).

In the **Cherokee Talking Circle** the formal closing of the circle also represents the closing of the conflict, designed to sustain harmony over long periods of time. The problems discussed within the circle are not to be mentioned outside the circle. Cherokees explain this process as one that develops respect for the participants and the sacredness of the ceremony, thus enhancing the long term sustainability of the decisions reached (Garrett 1998).

Some Native Americans utilise a forgiveness tense in their language that allows them to use the knowledge they gained through processing conflict even though those sessions have been formally closed. By using the forgiveness tense, the speakers indicate that the conflicts have been resolved, that they are only being discussed so that others can learn from the stories of the participants (Ross 1996, 188-189).

In Indigenous conflict processing, time is often measured within its context in relation to what is happening with other members of the community and within the natural world (Ross 1996, pp. 73-75). Lederach (1995, p. 96) explains the concept of right time as 'placing oneself in the stream of time and space and determining at any given moment what things mean and therefore what should be done'.

In their working paper on Ho'oponopono, Shook & Kwan (1987, p. 11) give an example of *right time* in their practice of Ho'oponopono. They explain that disrupted schedules are often indicators that the time is not right to implement a particular action. They explain that *right time* is indicated when things fall into place and the 'way is clear'.

A further example of *right time* may be found in Haudenosaunee processing of conflict, in which quality of time is an important consideration. For example, sessions are never held at night when the participants might be tired and their responses affected by fatigue (What is the Great Law of Peace 1999).

Summary

Within this section, I have provided a brief analysis of four Indigenous approaches to consensual conflict processing. I maintain that these American Indian, First Nations and Native Hawaiian approaches share a common worldview that emphasises interconnections, process, holistic experience and expanded conceptualisations of time. In the following section, I briefly discuss an Indigenous model of consensual conflict processing developed for urban Indigenous communities.

A First Nations Model of Processing Conflict in Urban Indigenous Communities

The previous examples of Indigenous models of conflict transformation are traditional approaches that have been practiced for centuries and continue to be practised today. However, not all Indigenous people have opportunities to practice traditional ways within a traditional community structure. The processes of colonisation have fragmented, separated and marginalised many Indigenous people (Reynolds 1999; Ross 1996). Urbanised Indigenous people often do not have access to their traditional ways of processing conflict. Furthermore, they often find themselves in Indigenous communities created from several Indigenous nations. In urban settings, Indigenous peoples have often been dependent on Western justice systems (Huber 1993; Ross 1996). At times Indigenous peoples have been offered alternatives such as Western mediation which makes claims of offering more self determination than judicial systems (Beattie 1997). However, Western models of alternative dispute resolution have been criticised as culturally inappropriate for Indigenous peoples due to differences in the worldview underlying the techniques (Beattie 1997; Behrendt 1995; Bluehouse & Zion 1993; Grose 1995; Yazzie 1995).

Concerns have been expressed regarding the practice of imposing inappropriate conflict resolution methodologies on Indigenous peoples (Galtung 1996; Huber 1993; Ross 1996; Yazzie 1995). As an alternative to Western models of conflict

resolution, some Indigenous peoples are drawing on traditional values of their culture to develop new approaches to transforming conflict (Ross 1996; Huber 1993).

One example of the development of new model based on traditional teachings is the Medicine Wheel Model of Conflict Resolution. The Medicine Wheel Model was developed in Canada by representatives of several First Nations of Canada assisted by Marg Huber (1993), an experienced non-Indigenous mediator. The representatives analysed the cultural principles that were common to each of the Nations and included them in the new approach. To structure their process, they used the Medicine Wheel, a symbol familiar to many First Nations and Native American Nations. In the next few paragraphs I will elaborate on the concept of the Medicine Wheel, as it also forms a central part of my research methodology.

In Native American worldview, the Medicine Wheel is both a symbol and a metaphor for the journey through life. The Medicine Wheel is a hologram of Native American cosmology, representing all the processes of the universe (Bopp et al. 1989). Marg Huber (1993) explains that in the Medicine Wheel Model of conflict resolution, the wheel also represents the journey through the phases of mediation. Within the process, the Medicine Wheel is used as a map to guide and structure the mediation process. Person and process are represented on the wheel, connected with the patterns of nature. The process is grounded in Native American spirituality, with prayer, ceremony and ritual considered to be integral parts of the proceedings.

Huber (1993) explains that the four directions of the Medicine Wheel represent specific stages in consensual conflict processing. The East represents new beginnings, or illumination of the conflict. Participants are encouraged to consider the values that are represented by the East: renewal, trust, hope and acceptance. In the South, participants are encouraged to tell their story with generosity of spirit and sensitivity for the feelings of others. In the West, participants are encouraged to go within themselves, discovering what is important in transforming the conflict in relation to the connections between self, others, nature and traditional teachings (Bopp et al. 1989). In the North, participants work together to find solutions, that are balanced and restore harmony to the community as a whole. At the end of the session, the participants place themselves in the middle of the Medicine Wheel to gain a holistic perspective from which to put intentions into action (Huber 1993, pp. 358-360; Bopp et al 1989).

The Medicine Wheel Model illustrates the complex web of interconnections that characterises the worldview of First Nations and Native American peoples. The conflict processing session does not seek to simplify or fragment these interconnections, rather to integrate them within the sessions (Huber 1993, pp. 358-360).

Within the Medicine Wheel Model, the processes reflect an emphasis on restoring relationships above solving specific problems. Facilitators are chosen on their ability to understand and support the restoration of the complex web of interconnections that form Indigenous realities (Huber 1993, p. 357).

Holistic experience is also incorporated into the processes of the Medicine Wheel Model. As portrayed through the four positions of the Medicine Wheel, spiritual, emotional, bodily and intellectual aspects of experience are all honoured aspects of processing conflict. The natural world is also integrated into the processes through the teachings of animals, plants and natural processes that are connected with each of the directions of the Wheel (Huber 1993, p. 362).

In the Medicine Wheel Mediation, time is conceptualised as flexible, related to processes within the community. Accordingly, the participants are allowed to tell their story of the conflict, regardless of how long this might take (Huber 1993, pp. 361-362). Value is not placed on completing the sessions in relation to clock time or deadlines based on the calendar, but on *right time*, completing the process when all aspects of the conflict have been dealt with in the proper manner (Ross 1996). Time is also conceptualised as cyclical, in which past, present and future are one (Huber 1993 p. 361).

Summary

As can be seen in the previous discussions regarding Indigenous consensual conflict processing there are many similarities among them, particularly in regard to underlying worldview (LeBaron 1995; LeResche 1993). Examples of these similarities may be seen in the emphasis on re-establishing harmony which is central to these American Indian, First Nations and Native Hawaiian approaches to consensual conflict processing. Their methodologies stress interconnections between people and the natural world. The processes are facilitated by respected elders rather than outside professionals. The methods include spirituality as an

integral part of the process. Native procedures also allow generous amounts of time to transform conflict, relying on *right time* rather than clock time. Indigenous processes of conflict transformation include the reinforcement of traditional values and teachings.

Many of these characteristics of Native American and Native Hawaiian peacemaking are reflected in the conflict processing methodology of other Indigenous cultures. In the following section I discuss Aboriginal Australian processing of conflict in relation to the principles of worldview that characterise Native Americans and Native Hawaiian consensual conflict processing.

Australian Aboriginal Conflict Management

Australian Aborigines' conflict processing is based on many of the same central characteristics of worldview as American Indian, First Nations and Native Hawaiian processes. Australian Aboriginal groups are not homogenous, rather they represent over two hundred distinct groups (Behrendt 1995, p. 7-8). Therefore, the specific forms and procedures of dealing with conflict differ according to clan affiliation. Aboriginal clans also differ depending on the range of experiences of colonisation. Regardless of these differences, consensual conflict processing was and continues to be a major Aboriginal dispute resolution method (Bird 1993, p. 285). Behrendt (1995, pp. 23-29) similarly notes that although there are extensive differences in language, custom and practice between Aboriginal clans, there are also common underlying principles of worldview which shape their consensual processing of conflict.

Worldview Underlying Aboriginal Australian Conflict Processing

In this section I my aim is to show that the principles of worldview that underlie Australian Aboriginal conflict processing reflect characteristics similar to those of Native American and Native Hawaiian worldview.

Paradigm of Interconnectedness

Traditional forms of Aboriginal conflict transformation reflect paradigms of interconnectedness. The purpose of Aboriginal conflict transformation is to restore or maintain harmony of interrelationships between land, kin, and the law (McCrae

et al. 1997, p. 101). Characteristics of traditional Aboriginal principles of processing conflict are consensus, wisdom, and reciprocity, all characteristics that enhance and support interconnections (Watson 1986, pp. 13-16).

Emphasis on Relationships

Aboriginal Australians, both historically and currently, have a relational social cosmology, including a relational ideology of conflict and conflict resolution. This worldview is reflected in Australian Aboriginal conflict processing in which the primary purpose is restoration of group harmony rather than resolution of specific problems (Beattie 1997; Behrendt 1995, p. 7, 17; Grose 1995).

Furthermore, the relationships that are important in Aboriginal processing of conflict include relationships with land. Indeed, relationships with traditional lands continue to be of central importance in Aboriginal Australian worldview, even in urban settings where traditional links with land may have been seriously disrupted by colonisation (Behrendt 1995, p. 9).

In Aboriginal Australian conflict processing, relationship is privileged above isolated expertise, as can be seen in the selection of facilitators based on their ability to maintain or restore the web of community (Grose 1995, p. 31). In many Aboriginal approaches to processing conflict, selected elders, often family members, are the intervenors in public expressions of conflict (Tonkinson 1987, pp. 197-217). Traditionally, intervenors in the public exhibition of violence were assigned specific roles so that the punishment meted out was just enough to end the current dispute and restore relationships within the community (Tonkinson 1987).

Holistic Processes rather than analytical techniques

In Aboriginal Australian worldview, open emotional expression is an integral part of relationship (Eades 1991). Public expression of emotion is therefore a critical feature of Aboriginal conflict transformation. Aboriginal dispute resolution involves a more open, public expression of emotion than is exhibited in Western dispute resolution. Marcia Langton (1988, pp. 73-77) explains that swearing and fighting are often carried out in public with the express purpose of transforming the conflict. Through venting emotion openly the conflict is altered by reducing tensions so that the dispute no longer interferes with the harmony of the community. In the past these public expressions of emotion were controlled by elders and

minders so that they were not so volatile as to interfere with restoring relationships (Langton 1988, pp. 73-73).

Within Aboriginal clans, processing conflict involves a range of public expression regarding conflict. Sometimes the public display is less dramatic than a fight, and is expressed through indirect speech, 'talking bad about a person', so that they know they have caused pain or harm (Tonkinson 1987, p. 197-217). The range of expression extends to 'lack of expression' which occurs when a clan member is banished from the community. Tonkinson (1987) explains that banishment was traditionally considered to be the most severe outcome of conflict transformation, stressing the importance of relationship within Aboriginal conflict processing.

Expanded Conceptualisations of Time

Traditional Aboriginal procedures of processing conflict are based on cyclical expressions of time. Rather than being based on linear measures defined by clocks and deadlines, Aboriginal approaches to conflict are based on cycles found in nature and Aboriginal law (Harris 1980, p. 33). An example of a worldview that conceptualises time as cyclical can be found in this description by an Aboriginal man, Silas Roberts, during negotiations over the Ranger uranium mine.

> The proper way of opening up a question with us was to send a message to someone in his country and then wait just outside his country for a reply and to say in the message what you want and when you will start coming in. The time and entry would be set well ahead by the position and size of the moon. When the time came you would start into the country concerned (always in the daytime) and make smoke signals to show where you were. The landowners would bring you in the last 30 or 40 miles if the land owners were ready. If the landowners were not ready then the messenger would tell you to wait and you would have to wait perhaps a few days. (Silas Roberts, cited in Williams 1985, p.245).

As will be discussed further in Chapter Four, this conceptualisation of time contrasts with dominant Western worldview in which time is linear, and responsible behaviour during negotiations is seen as that of meeting deadlines based on clock and calendar (Galtung 1990, 1996).

Aboriginal Australians also practice a concept of *right time* through which community members are able to determine when all elements of a situation (political, interpersonal, natural and spiritual) support a particular decision. With respect to the web of interconnections that constitute Aboriginal worldview,

determining *right time* in relation to processing conflict recognises that all factors of a situation are interconnected (Tripcony 1997, pers. com. 13 Nov.).

Effects of Colonisation upon Aboriginal Conflict Processing

Often Western scholars argue that traditional Aboriginal Australian methods of conflict processing have been so disrupted by colonisation that they are no longer viable. For example, T.G.H Strehlow (cited in Kirby 1983, pp. 124-126) stated that Aboriginal customary law could no longer be relied upon in resolving disputes because the mandatory cultural supports, such as the traditional authority of the elders, were no longer unquestioningly accepted. The traditional role of elders has been disturbed by the forced relocation of many Aboriginal clan groups who were thrown together during the mission and assimilation phases of Australian government policy (Grose 1995, pp. 330-331). These enforced groupings have complicated the traditional processes of knowledgeable facilitation by elders who now must contend with communities of mixed and rival groups. However, Grose (1995, pp. 335-336) argues that labelling Aboriginal processes as inoperable because of colonisation is an essentialising tactic of Western scholars in that it attempts to restrict Aboriginal culture to the ways it was practiced before European contact. Grose (1995) maintains that acknowledgement and accommodation of Aboriginal worldview are essential to understanding the continually developing conflict processing of Aboriginal Australians.

In Queensland, the Australian state within which I conducted my research, the colonial practice of Westernisation continues to impact consensual conflict processing involving Aboriginal Australians. Western methods of consensual conflict processing dominate both practice and training in Aboriginal communities (Beattie 1997; Behrendt 1995, p. 61). The Queensland Justice Department has implemented training of Aboriginal mediators, which purports to be culturally sensitive (Pringle 1996). However, the Queensland training continues the hegemony of Western worldview, refusing to accredit Aboriginal mediators whose worldview of humans and relationships challenges Western conceptualisations of mediator impartiality and objectivity (Grose 1995, p. 66).

Summary

As I have shown in this section of the chapter, Australian Aboriginal conflict processing shares underlying principles of worldview similar to American Indian, First Nations and Native Hawaiian conflict processing: interconnectedness, emphasis on relationship, holistic processes, and expanded definitions of time. These characteristics reflect a worldview distinctly different from the worldview underlying Western problem solving models of conflict resolution which are frequently imposed on Australian Aboriginal communities. Indeed, more Australian scholars are critiquing the inadequacies of Western alternative models of processing conflicts in relation to Indigenous Australians (Beattie 1997; Behrendt 1995; Grose 1995; Walker 1998a, 1999a).

Conclusion

Native American, Native Hawaiian and Australian Aboriginal approaches to processing conflict are based on many of the same underlying principles of worldview. There are also significant methodological similarities including: the role of respected elders as facilitators; the integral role of spirituality, ritual and ceremony, and the natural world; flexible time frames; and reinforcement of traditional values.

Throughout this thesis I maintain that it is structurally violent to impose Western conflict resolution methodologies upon Indigenous people. As will be seen in the analysis of Western conflict processing in the next chapter, dramatic differences exist between the worldviews underlying Western and Indigenous conflict processing. In Chapter Four my analysis of the literature regarding Western conflict processing illustrates the failure of the dominant Western problem solving methodologies to accommodate deep cultural differences. In addition, I develop support for my assertion that the uncritical implementation of Western models in regard to conflicts involving Indigenous peoples contains elements of structural violence.

CHAPTER FOUR

WESTERN METHODS OF CONSENSUAL CONFLICT PROCESSING

In this chapter I discuss the literature regarding Western models of consensual conflict processing. In the first section, I analyse Western problem solving approaches including Fisher and Ury's (1981) *principled negotiation* and Burton's conflict *resolution* (1996). As discussed in Chapter One, Western problem solving models are often implemented in conflicts involving Indigenous participants, without regard to cultural implications. Furthermore, Western problem solving models make claims of being *acultural,* applicable to conflicts regardless of the cultural background of the participants (Avruch & Black 1990). In the analysis that I develop in this chapter, I demonstrate that the worldview underlying these approaches differs markedly from the worldview of Indigenous conflict processing. Furthermore, I maintain that Western problem solving models are not *acultural*, rather they proselytise Western culture without full acknowledgement of doing so (Kraybill 1996; Galtung, 1990; Lederach 1995).

In the second part of this chapter I discuss the theory and practice of Western conflict *transformation* which reflects a worldview similar to that of Indigenous processing of conflict. I discuss the work of John Paul Lederach (1995, 1997) and Bush and Folger (1994) as well as that of other transformative scholars, suggesting that Western conflict *transformation* offers opportunities for genuine dialogue between Western and Indigenous scholars.

In the third part of this chapter, I provide a rationale for the use of elicitive approaches designed to make explicit the implicit conflict theory and methodologies of participants (Lederach 1995). I suggest that elicitive approaches provide a site of resistance to the Westernisation of conflict processing in that they incorporate the participants' worldview and knowledge regarding conflict processing.

Western Methods of Consensual Conflict Processing: Problem solving models

The dominant Western approaches to processing conflict, both in practice and research, are based on problem solving models (Bush & Folger 1994, p. 25). In this

section, I discuss the work of three of the main scholars of problem solving approaches to resolving conflict: Roger Fisher and William Ury (1981, 1997) and Richard W. Burton (1986, 1987, 1996). In the first part of this section, I discuss some of the central characteristics of Fisher & Ury's approach as it compares with the Indigenist approaches discussed in Chapter Three. Then I move to a critique of Burton's approach as it relates to conflicts involving Indigenous peoples. I maintain that both of these approaches are problematic when used with Indigenous peoples.

Fisher & Ury's problem solving model

Fisher & Ury (1981) have developed a problem solving approach to conflict which they entitle *principled negotiation*. Their methodology assumes people to be rational, calculating, and cost-benefit oriented (Avruch & Black 1990, p. 223). The main purpose of Fisher and Ury's approach is to arrive at a mutually agreeable solution that meets the individual interests of the parties involved. Their problem solving model is based on an individualistic approach to conflict which favours the satisfaction of individual interests as the primary purpose of conflict resolution (Bush & Folger 1994).

Fisher and Ury's (1981) problem solving approach has several characteristics that make its use problematic in conflicts involving Indigenous peoples. Firstly, their approach is designed primarily to satisfy individual needs rather than to restore relationships. Such an atomistic approach is in direct contrast to Indigenist approaches which conceptualise people as selves-in-relationship (Walker 1999a). As discussed in Chapter Three, many Indigenous cultures consider maintaining and restoring harmony to be more important than reaching an agreement regarding the specific issues involved in the conflict (LeResche 1993; LeBaron 1995).

Secondly, Fisher and Ury advise that participants 'separate the person from the problem' (Fisher & Ury 1997, pp. 15-40). They advocate being 'hard on the issues' underlying the conflict, while being 'soft on the people' (Fisher & Ury 1997, p. 55). While Fisher and Ury indicate concern for relationship, they describe the major portion of relationship development as occurring outside of problem solving sessions (Fisher & Ury 1997, p. 164-165). In contrast to Indigenous conflict processing, Fisher and Ury do not recommend that the facilitators of problem solving sessions directly address building or healing relationships within the sessions.

Fisher & Ury's approach is problematic in Indigenous cultures in which individuals are not conceptualised as separable from the issues, but as integral parts of the conflict and its solution. Fisher and Ury's (1981, 1997) problem solving approach tends to work well for business and corporate conflicts in which there is no or little relationship factor (Bush & Folger 1994, p. 47). However, in conflicts in which relationships play a significant role, an emphasis on problem solving may not lead to as effective a solution as one that maintains or improves the relationships involved (Bush and Folger 1994, p. 47). I maintain that in colonised societies in which alienation between Indigenous and non-Indigneous peoples is a major factor in many conflicts, problem solving approaches do not adequately address the rebuilding and strengthening of relationships.

Fisher and Ury's approach has also been criticised for its claims of cultural universality (Avruch & Black 1990). In their 1997 revision of their original text, Fisher and Ury clarify their approach to implementing their model with people from other cultures. They recommend general flexibility in regard to pacing, levels of formality, physical proximity, communication style, time frames, locations and choice of negotiator. They also caution about making these decisions solely on the basis of cultural affiliation of the parties, warning against stereotyping or ignoring individual and intragroup differences (Fisher & Ury 1997, pp. 173-176). However, Fisher and Ury fail to make explicit the cultural underpinnings of their approach. Therefore they do not adequately explore the cultural biases of their model (Avruch 1998, pp. 76-80).

Fisher & Ury's problem solving model: Role of Emotion

In Fisher & Ury's (1981, 1997) problem solving approach, emotions are acknowledged and respected in the process. Indeed, Fisher and Ury (1997, p. 30) say that in 'a bitter dispute, feelings may be more important than talk'. Nevertheless, their approach seems to be one of getting the emotions out of the way so that a settlement can be reached (Avruch 1998, p. 78). Their approach is in contrast to Indigenist methods described in Chapter Three, in which emotional expression is seen as equally important or more important than resolving specific problems.

Summary

In this section, I have provided a brief discussion of Fisher and Ury's (1981, 1997) problem solving approach. I maintain that the deep-seated conflicts that exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in colonised countries cannot adequately be addressed within Western problem solving approaches. In the following sub-sections of this chapter, I provide further support for this position through analysing another major problem solving model and by developing an analysis of problem solving models in general.

Burton's problem solving approach

John W. Burton has developed a problem solving model he terms *analytical conflict resolution* which acknowledges the deep seated nature of protracted conflict. In this regard, his problem solving approach offers a stronger analysis of conflicts between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in colonised societies. However, although his approach is designed to reduce both direct and structural violence, I maintain that his techniques have elements of structural violence when utilised in conflict involving colonised Indigenous peoples. Firstly, there are significant differences in the worldviews that underlie Burton's conflict resolution and Indigenous conflict processing. Secondly, Burton's strict instructions regarding adherence to the rules of his model contain elements of Westernisation, the shaping of processes to fit within Western worldview (Galtung 1990, p. 313).

Burton is careful to distinguish the terminology he uses from that used in other problem solving approaches such as Fisher and Ury's (1981, 1997) *principled negotiation*. Firstly, Burton defines conflict *resolution* in a quite specific manner. He uses the term *resolution* to describe processes that are free of coercion (Burton 1996, pp. 7-12). In Burton's approach, conflicts may considered to be *resolved* if they are: *complete*- acceptable to all parties; *self-supporting*- perceived as fair by all parties; *uncompromising*- parties' goals are not compromised; *innovative*- the solution establishes a new, positive relationship between the parties; and *uncoerced*- the parties arrive at a solution without any imposition of outside authority (Mitchell 1990, pp 150-151).

Burton (1996, pp. 7-12) also distinguishes the term *disputes* from that of *conflicts*. According to Burton, *disputes* have elements which are amenable to

bargaining or compromise, whereas *conflicts* involve deep seated needs which are not negotiable. He maintains that *conflicts* cannot be solved through negotiations based on compromise, rather must be analysed for underlying problems which need to be addressed (Burton 1996).

Burton makes several distinctions between his problem solving approach and that of Fisher & Ury (1981, 1997). Firstly, Burton maintains that not all interests are negotiable. Fisher and Ury (1997, p. 49-50) state that basic human needs of security, economic well-being, belonging, recognition and control over one's life are people's most important interests, and should be taken into consideration in negotiations. In contrast, Burton argues that human needs for recognition, security, and identity are essential to being fully human, and cannot be bargained away. Therefore, in Burton's analysis, negotiating over basic human needs is not effective in decreasing conflict, and may even exacerbate conflict (Burton 1997, 32-40).

Burton's theory of human needs addresses some of the complex issues that are interwoven into deep seated, long-term conflicts. For example, conflicts between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in colonised societies are characterised by protracted conflicts and continued structural violence regarding identity, economic wellbeing, recognition and self-determination. Burton (1997, p 42) acknowledges the negative effects of such structural violence, the ways 'in which institutions and policies damage or destroy individual values and development'.

However, as mentioned previously, Burton's work itself contains elements of structural violence. In maintaining that his methodology is *acultural*, that is applicable to all cultures, Burton elevates his worldview above that of other cultures (Galtung 1990). In so doing, Burton limits the full expression and potential of colonised Indigenous peoples to utilise their own conflict processing philosophy and methodologies in addressing conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Johan Galtung (1990) argues that basic needs approaches of resolving conflict such as Burton's (1987) are culturally biased in assuming that non-negotiable human needs are universally applicable to all cultures. He cautions against specifying a list of basic human needs based on Western worldview, suggesting rather that general categories be considered, such as security, welfare, and identity needs. Galtung (1990, p. 303) furthermore stresses that people of differing cultures meet those needs in very different ways:

> A theory of needs should serve as a basis for a rich image of human beings and should demand of social constructions that they respect this richness. The argument is not against having priorities in concrete situations...but against any theory of needs that tries to universalize the priorities, freezing them into a general law, and thereby decreasing the diversity.

Although Galtung challenges the concept of universal needs, he still suggests the development of categories, a conceptualisation of human needs which reflects an atomistic worldview in which a whole can be broken into its constituent parts. In contrast, Native American (Peat 1994; Ross 1996) and Aboriginal Australian epistemologies (Christie 1992) explore the interconnections between concepts rather than the establishment of categories.

Summary

In the previous section, I have briefly reviewed the literature regarding two of the major Western problem solving models of processing conflict. I maintain that these models are problematic when used with Indigenous peoples, primarily because starkly different worldviews underlie Western problem solving models and Indigenist models of processing conflict. In the following section, I analyse the dominant Western problem solving models of processing conflict in regard to their underlying principles of worldview. I also contrast the parameters of the worldview underlying these approaches with that of Indigenist conflict processing.

Worldview underlying Western Problem Solving Approaches

The theoretical underpinnings of Fisher and Ury's (1984) and Burton's (1987) problem solving approaches reflect significant differences from those of Indigenous worldviews. In this section, I will provide support from existing research literature for the ways in which these differences in worldview impact upon cross-cultural use of the models. I maintain that the worldview underlying Western problem solving models reflects:

- an atomistic paradigm
- emphasis on technique
- emphasis on intellectual experience
- bounded, linear conceptualisations of time

Atomistic paradigm

Western problem solving models are based on a paradigm which conceptualises humans as autonomous individuals (Folger & Bush 1994, pp. 3-25). As such they reflect an atomistic paradigm or framework (Avruch & Black 1990), rather than one that acknowledges interconnections. Furthermore, Western problem solving models are based on 'an analytical rather than holistic conceptualisation of epistemology' in which effective solutions are reached by breaking down the conflict into its component parts (Galtung 1990, p. 316-317)

The atomistic conceptualisations on which these Western models are based also depict relationships as shaped by, yet separable from conflict processing. Although problem solving methods are considered to be more beneficial to relationships than the more adversarial processes of adjudication and arbitration, resolving specific problems is prioritised over relationship development, particularly in regard to interpersonal relationships.

Western problem solving models reflect an atomistic paradigm, which focuses on individuals as separate autonomous units rather than as selves-in-relationship. For example, Burton's basic human needs approach is individualistic rather than communally based in that it defines human needs of the individual, not human needs of societies (Galtung 1990, pp.317-319). As discussed previously in this chapter, most Indigenous cultures define human beings in relation rather than in isolation. These differences in conceptualisations of human beings influence the appropriateness of Western methodologies in conflicts involving Indigenous peoples (Walker 1999a).

Furthermore, Western problem solving approaches reflect a worldview based on 'a man-over-nature conceptualisation of relations to nature' (Galtung 1990, p. 319). As such they contrast sharply with Indigenist approaches which honour and acknowledge interconnections within the natural world. For example, Australian Aborigines' conflict processing acknowledges a 'belief in custodianship of land' and 'equality with all other creatures' (Behrendt 1995, p. 77). Likewise, American Indian and First Nations conflict processing refers to animals, plants, and the animate natural world as an integral part of the process (Huber 1993; Bluehouse & Zion 1993, pp. 332-333).

The role of facilitator as an impartial, unbiased observer in problem solving models also reflects an atomistic paradigm in which the participants are considered separately, rather than in relation to their interconnections. For example, the role of third party is not that of a well-known and respected community leader, as is the case in many Indigenous methods. Rather, facilitators in Western problem solving models are selected for their neutrality. They are expected to be unbiased in regard to the parties to the conflict. Therefore, facilitators with little knowledge about the conflict are generally considered to be more desirable than ones with extensive knowledge of the conflict (Burton 1996, pp. 60-61).

Emphasis on Technique

Both problem solving models discussed in this chapter emphasise specific techniques rather than flexible processes. Although Burton's elaboration of his model expresses a higher level of control than does Fisher & Ury, both rely on a discrete set of techniques to move the participants toward an agreement.

For instance, Burton's (1996, pp. 45-82) process of conflict resolution is based around 56 very specific techniques or 'rules'. He emphasises the importance of strict adherence to these rules, stating that:

> In analytical facilitated conflict resolution, where tight control of discussion is required, it is most important that the rules are clearly understood, consistently observed by the facilitators, and respected by all concerned (Burton 1996, p. 45).

Burton's human needs approach to resolving conflict has been criticised for its conceptualisation of needs as 'present centred' rather than changing through on-going processes (Galtung 1990, pp. 315-316). This concept contrasts starkly with the Indigenous worldview discussed in Chapter Three, in which Indigenous conflict processing involves conceptualisations of needs as extending generations into both the past and the future.

Likewise, Fisher and Ury's (1981, 1997) problem solving model is based on a series of techniques with a narrow purpose: the satisfaction of individual interests. Although Fisher and Ury allow more flexibility in their process in regard to the background of the participants, their model is also constrained by techniques designed to lead to a mutually agreeable settlement.

Both of these Western problem solving models contrast with Indigenous approaches which privilege process over technique. For example, in Australian Aboriginal conflict processing, fixed techniques are considered to hamper or stop conflict processing, rather than facilitate it:

> The heart of the traditional dispute resolving system is procedure – not fixed rules for setting norms of conduct....As soon as an indigenous community is forced to write down its norms and enforce them uniformally, the whole soul of traditional law is destroyed. (Williams cited in Grose 1995, p. 333).

Privileging intellectual experience

In both of the problem solving models explored in this chapter, intellectual analysis is considered to be the primary mode of expression. Thus intellectual experience is privileged over emotional expression, spiritual experience and experience of the natural world.

In problem solving models, emotions are considered to be an inevitable part of the conflict resolution proceedings. However, they are considered to be an aspect that has to be 'worked through' in order to get to the real business of analysing the problem in ways that lead to solutions (Avruch 1998, p. 78). In most cases, emotional expression is allowed only to 'vent' the emotions so that the participants can move on to the issues underlying the conflict (Folger & Bush 1994, p. 271).

Spirituality is neither mentioned nor integrated into either of the problem solving models explored in this chapter. Indeed, many Indigenous researchers comment on the problematic lack of spirituality within Western models of processing conflict (Huber 1993; Shook & Kwan 1987; Yazzie 1995). In contrast, as discussed in Chapter Three, Native American, Native Hawaiian and Australian Aboriginal methodologies all emphasise the central role of spirituality in the processing of conflict.

Neither the Problem Solving Approach nor the Human Needs Approach mentions relationship with the natural world as an integral part of the conflict resolution procedures. Johann Galtung (1990, pp. 318-319) expressly criticises the way in which nature is 'desouled' within Western conflict processing, raising the possibility that 'animals, plants and other forms of nature' might be conceptualised as possessing needs. Furthermore, he raises the possibility of challenges to current conflict resolution theory in regard to relationship with the natural world.

Linear, bounded conceptualisations of time

In problem solving approaches, scheduling of sessions is based on linear, finite definitions of time (Burton 1996, p. 82). For example, in Burton's analytical conflict resolution, facilitators are instructed to complete the conflict resolution sessions within the shortest possible time frames. These approaches contrast with Indigenist conflict processing in which time is viewed as cyclical, and appropriate time is measured both in relation to many generations and to the interconnections between the conflict, the participants, society and the natural world.

Summary

The central characteristics of the worldview underlying Western problem solving approaches to consensual conflict processing are starkly different from those of the Indigenous worldview discussed in Chapter Three. Both Native American (Cajete 2000; Peat 1994; Ross 1996) and Australian Aboriginal worldviews (Grose 1995, p. 329) are ontologically and epistemologically different from those of the dominant Western culture. In the following section I discuss these differences as a challenge to the claims of cultural universality that are often made in regard to Western problem solving approaches.

Cultural Issues in Western Conflict Resolution theory and practice

As argued in the previous section, Western problem solving models are based on the dominant Western worldview, which is atomistic, linear and causally related (Galtung 1990, pp. 312-325). Current literature on culture and conflict resolution criticises the application of Western paradigms to conflicts involving Indigenous peoples (Grose 1995; Beattie 1997; Yazzie 1995), and urges further research to determine the conflict resolution methods of other cultures (Avruch & Black 1991, pp. 31-37). In the last ten years a growing number of researchers have addressed Indigenous processing of conflict, for example Beattie (1994), Garrett (1998), Grose (1995), Huber (1993), LaResche (1993), LeBaron (1995), Yazzie (1995). Nevertheless, the majority of formal research on processing conflict continues to focus on Western methodologies.

Cultural Difference

In previous sections of this chapter, I have argued that Western problem solving models are not culturally universal, rather they reflect unacknowledged cultural underpinnings of Western worldview. Nevertheless, authors of these problem solving models present their approaches as being applicable to all cultures. Fisher and Ury (1981, 1997) relegate differences in culture to the strata that can be 'worked through' during the conflict resolution process (Avruch & Black 1990, pp. 221-227). Fisher and Ury (1981, 1997) argue that cultural issues can be important and should be researched further, but they also state that their problem solving method can be successfully utilised by members of different cultures (1997, pp. 173-176).

Scholars and practitioners of the problem solving model often assign culture to the 'too hard basket' and instead emphasise techniques designed to cut across cultures. For example, in a working paper on the problem solving approach, Rubin and Sander (1989, pp. 89-96) express concerns that cultural stereotyping might lead mediators to misdiagnose problems. They encourage mediators to 'assume that differences within a culture are as profound as those differences between', advising that the best approach may be to assume that cultural impact in conflict resolution is a fable. However, dismissing culture in an analysis of intercultural conflict processing eliminates an essential dimension of human behaviour (Avruch & Black 1991, p. 27).

In contrast, other scholars argue that Western problem solving models, rather than being acultural, merely fail to make explicit the cultural basis of their own approach (Avruch & Black 1991). For example, Merry describes how the cultural parameters of processing conflict often remain at an 'out-of-awareness' level:

> We think of the practice of mediation as the application of techniques...yet these techniques are embedded within a surrounding cultural framework of unrecognized and taken for granted conceptions of the social world. This cultural framework consists of ideas about when to fight and when to compromise, notions of the self in relation to others, and theories about which third parties are entitled to intervene in problems and in what ways. To those who share this implicit framework, it is simply the natural and sensible way of doing things (Merry 1987, p. 1).

Western problem solving models are frequently imported into Indigenous communities with few modifications (Beattie 1997; Grose 1995; Lederach 1995).

Ron Kraybill (1996, p. 22) describes this proselytisation of Western approaches of processing conflict in the following manner: 'Where religions send missionaries, conflict resolution organisations send trainers'. He warns against the 'cultural imperialism involved in prescriptive approaches which ignore conflict theory and practice that are implicit in people's lived experience' (Kraybill 1996, p. 22). Elements of structural violence are evidenced in this silencing of Indigenous approaches to consensual conflict processing through the promotion of Western approaches.

As can be seen in discrepancies regarding which models are most frequently promoted and implemented, these differences in worldview are more than cultural points of interest. They are often the sites of political contestation of power. Indigenous worldviews are often silenced through *westernisation*, any process used to shape things in a Western mode (Galtung 1990, p. 313). Westernisation involves issues of both power and difference as members of Western cultures often forcefully impose their worldview. Currently 'the West has the power and inclination to institutionalize and implement its conceptions' (Galtung 1990, p. 314). Utilising the power of the dominant culture, Western methods have assumed hegemony in the fields of conflict resolution and mediation (Kraybill 1996, pp. 22-23; Lederach 1995).

In response to concerns regarding Western methodologies, researchers within the discipline of conflict studies recommend further studies regarding the difficulties in developing effective communication between individuals from differing cultures (Bendana 1996; Camilleri 1994; Clements 1994; Cohen 1991; Lederach 1991; Nudler 1990; Szalay 1981). Current literature also calls for further study of intercultural conflict resolution, the processing of conflicts that involve parties from more than one culture (Avruch & Black 1991; Barnes 1994). However, very little research has been completed on conflict resolution methodology that is designed to acknowledge and accommodate deep cultural differences such as worldview (Avruch & Black 1990, 1991; Galtung 1990, 1996).

I devised and implemented this research thesis in response to the sparsity of literature addressing appropriate methodologies of consensual conflict processing between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. To address this gap in the literature, I elicited and analysed local knowledge of Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians regarding their experiences of processing conflict. As I

demonstrate in Chapters 8-14, I believe that these findings have the potential to inform the theory and practice of transforming conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in colonised societies.

Summary

In this section, I have provided an analysis of the central characteristics of problem solving models of conflict resolution, which are based on Western worldview. The individualistic, atomistic approaches of Western conflict resolution contrast with the communal, interconnected, relationship oriented approaches found in Indigenous conflict methodologies. As such, the importation of Western models of conflict resolution into Indigenous communities, which continues apace, is at best inappropriate and at worst a continuing example of the cultural invasion established through colonisation.

In the next section of this chapter, I develop an analysis of Western conflict *transformation,* proposing that conflict transformation may provide a conceptualisation of conflict that more closely approximates Indigenous conflict processing and therefore provides an avenue for Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars to develop common dialogue regarding conflict processing.

Western Methodologies: Transformational Approaches

In this section, I discuss Western transformational approaches to processing conflict. I maintain that the worldview underlying these approaches reflects the central characteristics of Indigenous conflict processing. I also propose that Western approaches to conflict *transformation* provide a point at which Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and practitioners can communicate across difference.

Conflict *transformation* is a relatively new area in the Western discipline of conflict studies (Bush & Folger 1994; Burgess & Burgess 1996; Chasin et al 1996; Lederach 1997). In conflict *transformation,* the emphasis is on establishing and rebuilding relationships between the participants rather than on problem solving (Bush & Folger 1994; Lederach 1997). *Transformation* also indicates a change in the participants themselves as well as changes in the conflict situation (Folger & Bush 1994, pp.3-25).

In the following section, I provide a brief overview of two of the primary transformative approaches: John Paul Lederach's (1997) conflict *transformation* and Robert Bush and Joseph Folger's (1994) *Transformative Mediation.*

Lederach's Conflict *Transformation*

Leading conflict transformation scholar John Paul Lederach (1997) defines conflict *transformation* by setting out parameters similar to those of the Indigenous approaches discussed in Chapter Two. His parameters describe a holistic approach that stresses the development of long term harmonious relationships:

> ...conflict transformation represents a comprehensive set of lenses for describing how conflict emerges from, evolves within, and brings about changes in the personal, relational, structural, and cultural dimensions, and for developing creative responses that promote peaceful change within those dimensions through nonviolent mechanisms (Lederach 1997, p. 83).

Furthermore, Lederach's use of the term *transformation* implies an understanding that conflict is not eliminated, rather is a holistic process of changing the conflict in ways that improve both the situation and the lives of the people involved (Lederach 1997, p. 17).

Lederach (1997) proposes an integrated framework of transforming conflict which involves the restoration of relationships as well as attention to immediate and systemic conflicts. Lederach (1997, p.13) describes the ways in which processes of conflict transformation might be fostered in 'deeply divided societies' characterised by long term fear, hatred and mistrust. In his 1997 text, he primarily addresses armed conflicts; however, I maintain that many of his concepts are potentially useful in regard to conflicts between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in colonised societies which are also characterised by alienation, fear and mistrust.

Bush and Folger's transformational mediation

Bush and Folger's (1994) work focuses on the transformational aspects of the more narrowly defined processes of mediation, rather than the broader societal processes described by Lederach (1997). Bush and Folger's analysis of Western conflict processing makes explicit the individualistic ideological foundations of problem solving approaches (Folger & Bush 1994, pp. 9-15). In response to concerns about the ethical values of the individualistic philosophy underlying problem solving approaches, Bush and Folger (1994, pp. 3-25) have developed a

transformational approach which states that the primary purpose of mediation is the transformation of individuals and society. They describe this transformation as 'a change or refinement in the consciousness and character of individual human beings' (Bush & Folger 1994, p. 24). Bush and Folger maintain that transformative mediation procedures improve relationships between the individuals involved:

> Parties often discover that they can feel and express some degree of understanding and concern for one another despite their disagreement...(in these cases) mediation has thus engendered, even between parties who start out as fierce adversaries, acknowledgment and concern for each other as fellow human beings (Bush & Folger 1994, p. 20).

Bush and Folger call this process of respectful understanding *recognition*, 'the increased capacity for experiencing and expressing concern and consideration for others, especially others different from themselves' (Bush & Folger 1994, pp. 84-94). The second goal of their transformative approach is *empowerment*, 'strengthening capacity for encountering and dealing with adverse circumstances' (Folger & Bush 1994, pp. 15-16).

Transformative approaches are a minority voice in Western processing of conflict, both in practice and research (Bush & Folger 1994, pp. 21-32). However, conflict transformation theory holds promise for those who approach conflict with a desire for long-term understanding and reconciliation among the parties in the conflict. One strength of Bush and Folger's transformation approach lies in its emphasis on fundamental changes in the way people relate to each other rather than an emphasis on solving a particular problem. Such approaches hold promise for the deep-seated conflicts between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, in which wounded relationships and alienation are significant aspects of conflict.

Worldview of Western Conflict Transformation

In section two of this chapter, I provided an analysis of the central characteristics of the Western problem solving models and argued that they were conceptually different from Indigenous models of conflict processing, particularly in relation to social cosmology, or worldview. Furthermore, I argued that Western problem solving models were therefore inadequate for addressing the deep seated conflicts involving Indigenous peoples in colonised societies. In this section of Chapter Four, I discuss the worldview underlying Western transformational

approaches to processing conflict. I maintain that the worldview of Western transformational approaches closely reflects that of Indigenous methodologies and therefore provides space in which to develop communication regarding processing conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

A paradigm of interconnectedness

Transformative approaches to conflict are based on paradigms of interconnectedness in which participants are conceptualised as being connected with each other (Lederach 1997) and all things (Umbreit 1997). Furthermore, conflict transformation is based on a paradigm of interconnectedness that recognises the relation between past, present and long-term future. In conflict transformation, outcomes are not perceived as affecting solely the present participants. Rather, conflict transformation involves processes that address immediate conflicts, assist in healing the wounds of ancient and generational conflicts, and provide a structure designed to prevent conflicts within future generations (Lederach 1997).

Emphasis on Process and Relationships

Process

Conflict transformation emphasises process rather than a set of fixed techniques, and has been defined as 'a dynamic process of responding to and creating understanding and meaning during conflict resolution' (Folger & Bush 1994, p. 4). Conflict transformation is not defined by static outcomes or agreements. Rather, conflict transformation represents *processes* of building relationships and implementing positive social change (Bush & Folger 1994; Lederach 1997, p. 131). Lederach maintains that *techniques* are inadequate to meet the complexities of human experience because they cannot encompass all of the complexities of the human experience of conflict:

> ...anyone who has lived in settings of protracted conflict or engaged in peacemaking activities in divided societies knows that standardized formulas do not work. What we must acknowledge and address from the start of our discussion are the uniquely human dimensions of the types of conflict under consideration (Lederach 1997, p. 23).

Thus, conflict transformation privileges process over technique. Although techniques may be proposed within conflict transformation, they are malleable,

subject to change as the situation requires (Folger & Bush 1994, 274-275; Lederach 1997 pp. 84-85). Indeed, 'techniques' may provide somewhat mechanical responses to highly emotionally charged events and responses. In contrast, transformative approaches emphasise processes which encourage more holistic responses (Umbreit 1997).

Lederach argues that in pushing for a *solution* to conflict, the *process* of how those solutions are created is often forced or lacks clarity. Therefore, in developing sustainable transformation of conflict in deeply divided societies 'process matters more than outcome' (Kraybill, cited in Lederach 1995, p. 21). This is not to say that conflict transformation neglects outcomes altogether. Indeed, Lederach warns that solely focusing on process has been justifiably criticised as ignoring issues of justice and imbalances of power. Thus, although conflict transformation privileges respectful, appropriate processes, it also integrates just, equitable outcomes (Lederach 1997, p 22). Conflict transformation might thus be conceptualised as a *process-structure*, a framework that is flexible and subject to change as the situation requires (Lederach 1997, pp. 112, 80).

Emphasis on Relationship

Conflict transformation processes focus on developing and strengthening relationships. Lederach (1997, p. 26) goes so far as to claim that 'Relationship is both the basis of the conflict and its long-term solution'. However, as discussed in the previous section, conflict transformation does not solely address relationship; it also addresses the problems that characterise the immediate aspects of the conflict as well as the systemic roots of conflict. Nevertheless, the relational aspects of conflict are the primary consideration in the processes of conflict transformation (Bush & Folger 1994; Lederach 1997).

Lederach (1997) labels the relation building aspects of conflict transformation as *reconciliation*, explaining that in reconciliation, those involved in the conflict are engaged as 'humans-in-relationship' rather than as individual parties in conflict (Lederach 1997, p. 26). Although healing damaged relationships is often an integral part of Indigenous conflict processing, healing is seldom an acknowledged characteristic of Western problem solving models. In contrast, mediators of transformative approaches speak of conflict transformation as processes that assist in the healing of relationships (Umbreit 1997; Zumeta 1993).

Holistic experience in Conflict Transformation: intellect, body, mind and spirit

Transformative approaches to processing conflict involve holistic expressions of intellect, emotion, and spirit. These approaches contrast starkly with the analytical processes of Western problem solving approaches, which focus primarily on intellectual analysis. Lederach maintains that in settings of protracted conflict involving deep seated emotional and relationship factors, sustainable conflict transformation must involve processes that privilege holistic experience. In such situations, mechanistic, strictly rational methodologies could be both ineffective and offensive (Lederach 1997, p. 24).

Emotional experience in conflict transformation

In contrast to Western problem solving models, which emphasise the intellectual aspects of experience (Avruch 1998, pp. 90-91), Western conflict transformation emphasises the role of open emotional expression. Folger and Bush (1996, p. 271-272) view emotional expression as an integral part of the process of conflict transformation. They maintain that open emotional expression facilitates the participants' opportunities to better understand the realities of each other's experience.

> ...the transformative mediator considers emotion as a rich form of expression that, when unpacked and understood, can reveal plentiful information about the parties' views of their situation and each other (Folger & Bush 1996, p. 272).

In discussing his transformational approach to mediation, Mark Umbreit (1997, p. 202) argues that suppression of emotional experience may result in solutions that fail to sustain the transformation of conflict:

> ...most conflicts develop within a larger emotional and relational context characterized by powerful feelings of disrespect, betrayal, and abuse. When these feelings about the past and current state of the relationship are not allowed to be expressed and heard in a healthy manner, an agreement might be reached but the underlying emotional conflict remains.

Conflict transformation processes provide space for people to express their emotional experience of anger, pain and loss (Lederach 1997, p. 26). Holistic processes, which facilitate the acknowledgement of such expression as valid, are necessary to the healing of the wounds of conflict.

Holistic Experience in Conflict Transformation: Spiritual experience

Western conflict transformation explicitly recognises the spiritual aspects of processing conflict, which are often defined as 'understanding of the connectedness of all things' (Zumeta 1993, p. 25). Transformative scholars such as Umbreit (1997), Lederach (1997), Gold (1993) and Zumeta (1993) are outspoken in regard to the role of spirituality within conflict transformation. Some transformative scholars also incorporate spiritual ceremony and ritual such as prayer, silence or meditation within their process (Umbreit 1997, p.201-213).

Holistic Experience in Conflict Transformation: Experience of the natural world

Similar to Western problem solving models, Western conflict *transformation* has little to say regarding the natural world as an integral part of transforming conflict. In this respect, Western conflict transformation theory and methodology fail to establish a point of dialogue with Indigenous approaches which incorporate relationship and communication with the natural world as part of their holistic epistemologies.

Expanded conceptualisations of time

Western conflict transformation is characterised by different conceptualisations of time than are found in the bounded, urgent processes of Western problem solving models. In contrast, *transformative* approaches incorporate flexible time frames in which the participants express what they believe needs to take place to transform the conflict. Thus conflict transformation is conceptualised as a long-term process with no fixed termination (Folger & Bush 1996, p. 274-275). Conflict transformation also involves cyclical rather than linear movement through conflict processing. In transformative approaches, conflicts may be revisited many times as the situations and people involved change (Folger & Bush 1996, p. 275).

Rather than being 'present centred' as is Western conflict *resolution* (Galtung 1990, p. 313), conceptualisations of time in conflict transformation also encompass future implications as well as acknowledgement and recognition of the ancient past. Lederach in particular addresses the need to conceptualise time in long-term, even generational terms:

> ...we cannot respond with quick fixes to situations of protracted conflict. We must think about the healing of people and the rebuilding

> of the web of their relationships in terms relative to those that it took to create the hatred and violence that has divided them (Lederach 1997, p. 78).

Summary

As analysed in this section of Chapter Four, Western conflict *transformation* shares many of the central characteristics of Indigenous conflict processing. Indeed, some of the advocates of transformative approaches, such as Umbreit (1997, p. 202) and Lederach (1997, p 27), acknowledge the similarities between Indigenous processing of conflict and Western transformative approaches.

For example, Mark Umbreit (1997, p. 203) compares the healing aspects of Western transformative approaches to Indigenous traditions of peacemaking, or conflict processing, maintaining that both are 'spiritually grounded forms of resolving conflicts through a journey of healing and peacemaking'. Lederach (1997, p. 27) also compares expanded conceptualisations of time within conflict transformation to that of the Mohawk Indians who consider the effects of their decisions upon the seven generations.

I propose that the similarities between the central characteristics of Indigenous and Western conflict transformation provide a space for dialogue regarding conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Both Indigenous conflict processing and Western conflict transformation address conflict in ways that improve relationships and support long term sustainable change.

Culture and Conflict Transformation

Whereas Western problem solving approaches relegate culture to an issue that can be 'worked through' (Avruch & Black 1990, pp. 221-227), conflict transformation scholar Lederach (1995, 1997) acknowledges culture as an essential component of conflict transformation. He maintains that in protracted conflict situations, '... cultural features often drive and sustain the conflict more than substantive issues' (Lederach 1997, p. 18). Lederach (1997, p. 94) further maintains that 'the greatest resource for sustaining peace in the long term is always rooted in the local people and their culture'. Conflict transformation thus builds upon the cultural resources within a community rather than relying on prescriptive methodologies (Kraybill 1996, p. 22-23; Lederach 1997, p.95).

Lederach (1995, p. 5-6) maintains that Western scholars and practitioners in the field of conflict resolution seldom acknowledge concerns regarding power issues and cultural appropriateness. Thus in most Western conflict resolution training programs, culture is often only addressed as an advanced level technique that can be employed by facilitators (Lederach 1995). In contrast, conflict *transformation* methodologies integrate acknowledgement and accommodation of deep cultural differences into the process-structure that forms the framework of conflict transformation (Lederach 1995, 1997).

Rather than imposing or implementing techniques developed within Western cultures, Lederach recommends developing conflict theory and methodology by drawing on the experiences of the people directly involved in the conflict:

> understanding conflict and developing appropriate models of handling it will necessarily be rooted in, and must respect and draw from, the cultural knowledge of a people (Lederach 1995, p. 10).

Such an approach makes explicit people's ordinarily implicit beliefs about conflict and appropriate ways of addressing it. Such implicit local knowledge regarding conflict and conflict processing has also been termed *ethnoconflict theory* (Avruch & Black 1991, p. 22). Implementing conflict processing which integrates ethnoconflict theory contrasts with the dominant Western approaches to cross-cultural conflict processing which are presented as *acultural*, or *indiginised*, changed somewhat to better fit within Indigenous cultural contexts.

In this thesis, I have taken the stance recommended by Lederach (1995) and Avruch and Black (1991), that people's implicit knowledge is not a problem to be overcome in the techniques of processing conflict, rather it is a resource that informs theory and practice of processing conflict (Lederach 1995, p. 120). Therefore in my field research, I implemented methodology that integrates ethnoconflict theory and practice.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have analysed both Western problem solving models of conflict *resolution* as well as Western models of conflict *transformation.* I maintain that the worldview that underlies Western problem solving models, which dominate research and practice, is sufficiently different from Indigenous worldview as to be problematic in applications involving Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, I maintain

that ignoring these cultural differences and relying solely on Western models of processing conflict continues the power imbalances established through colonisation.

The analysis of the worldview underlying Western conflict *transformation* illuminates similarities in regard to the worldview underlying Indigenous conflict processing. I maintain that these similarities provide a space in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and practitioners can dialogue across difference to develop effective conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Thus far, this thesis has dealt with cross-cultural consensual processing of conflict, a comparison of Western and Indigenous approaches. I have compared some Indigenous and Western approaches to dealing with conflict in regard to the underlying principles of worldview. This analysis suggests that Western problem solving methods are not adequate for dealing with conflict involving colonised Indigenous peoples in which the aim is to improve relationships as well as to address immediate and systemic conflicts. Indeed, I assert that without acknowledgement and accommodation of Indigenous conflict theory and methodologies, Western models of processing conflict are culturally invasive and structurally violent when implemented in conflicts involving Indigenous peoples. Nevertheless, Western models continue to be implemented in processing intercultural conflict involving people from Western and Indigenous cultures. Seldom are Indigenous models implemented in ways that address the power imbalance inherent in the continual privileging of Western methodologies (Huber 1993).

There are only a few written texts that address the effects of difference in worldview on the intercultural processing of conflict, processing conflicts that involve members of more than one culture. Other than the Pacific Model (Barnes 1994), about which the literature is extremely brief, little has been written regarding methodology designed to address intercultural conflict methodologies. The literature is almost non-existent regarding intercultural conflict processing between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in colonised countries. Nevertheless, researchers studying cross cultural issues in processing conflict emphasise the importance of highlighting cultural differences which have largely been overlooked

through the privileging of Western methodology (Galtung 1990; Lederach 1995; Shook & Kwan 1987).

Within the discipline of conflict studies, there is also scant literature regarding acknowledgement and accommodation of deep differences in worldview. Therefore, in my field research on decreasing conflict and alienation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, I turned to people's experiences in transforming conflict rather than to models of professional practice. Through an analysis of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people's stories, I have come to understand more about *ethnoconflict theory*, local common sense knowledge of conflict (Avruch & Black 1991, p. 32). In the findings chapters of this thesis, I explain my analysis of *ethnoconflict* theory and practice through which I explore successful methods of transforming conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

As well as shaping the theory and practice of consensual conflict processing, issues of power and difference impact upon formal academic research in general. In the following chapter, I discuss issues of culture and power in regard to research methodologies involving Indigenous peoples.

CHAPTER FIVE

DIFFERENCE AND POWER: METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES IN DECOLONISING RESEARCH

In the previous chapters, I discussed the ways in which Westernisation has shaped current theory and practice of consensual conflict processing and largely silenced Indigenous worldview and methodologies. Social science research has also been shaped by the processes of colonisation in which the privileging of Western worldview and epistemologies has silenced many Indigenous paradigms. In this chapter, I explain how the processes of colonisation, particularly Westernisation, impact upon research involving Indigenous peoples. I also describe Indigenist methodologies designed to decolonise research and decrease the structural violence of Westernisation. By articulating Indigenous ways of managing knowledge, Indigenous scholars are *talking back*, using research as a site of resistance to the continuing practices of colonisation (Meyer 1998a; Rigney 1998; Smith 1999).

In this chapter I review the literature regarding the colonisation and decolonisation of research. In the first section I discuss the ways in which Western culture has regulated and silenced Indigenous ways of knowing. In the second section, I discuss Indigenist research that privileges Indigenous worldviews and epistemologies.

The methodology I have implemented throughout my research is based on an Indigenist paradigm. Thus the literature reviewed in this chapter provides support for my approach to implementing Indigenous epistemologies within formal academic research.

Imperial and Colonial impact on Research

> Today one might say that cognitive imperialism has been added to the goals of conversion and assimilation of the dominant governing society (Begay & Maryboy 1998, p. 30).

Historically the processes of imperialism and colonisation have regulated Indigenous knowledge production (Smith 1999). While in many Western cultures the more blatant excesses of imperialism have abated, the effects of imperial and colonial practices continue to silence the expression of Indigenous worldviews

within formal research (Duran & Duran 1995; Meyer 1998a; Rigney 1998; Smith 1999).

In the following subsections, I discuss ways in which colonisation has impacted on formal research, including:

- racism within academia
- the hegemony of Eurocentric frameworks
- silencing the sacred within research
- colonising minds

Colonial Impact on Research: Racism in Academia

> The social sciences in the United States and in comparable nations are hegemonic racialized ethnic social organizations and forms of knowing and interpreting life worlds (Stanfield II 1994, p. 177).

Social scientists are influenced by race-based assumptions that permeate Western society. However most social scientists remain unaware of both the overt and silent racist practices that permeate their own practice. Furthermore, they are seldom required to make explicit the ways in which racism influences their research (Stanfield II 1993b, pp. 17-25).

Western concepts continue to shape the parameters of what is considered acceptable research. Indigenous peoples are often studied in ways that depict them as 'other', placing them in the margins of society (Stanfield II 1993a, 1994,1998; Fine 1998, pp. 135-140). Imperial influence on social science research is also evident in the frequent selection of Indigenous people as objects of study (Deloria Jr. 1969; Smith 1999), while members of White middle-class society are largely protected from being the objects of research (Stanfield II 1998, p 335; Fine 1998, pp. 136-138).

Racism in academia is also evident in colonial policies and practices, based on Western research, which made claims regarding who was human and who was not (Stanfield II 1993b, p. 17). Under colonial rule many Indigenous peoples were classed as non-human (Deloria Jr. 1969; Smith 1999, p. 69). Current policies based on Western research continue to regulate who is officially identified as Indigenous and who therefore is entitled to or excluded from specific rights or privileges (Deloria Jr. 1999; Smith 1999).

The dominant Western society continues to control research involving Indigenous peoples through policies and practices designed to regulate Indigenous

identities. In the United States, for example, Indigenous identities continue to be regulated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs through conceptualisations of blood quantum, the supposed percentage of Indigenous blood defined by parentage. These definitions have been used to establish hierarchies of control over Indigenous peoples (Deloria Jr. 1969; Rigney 1998). In contrast, Indigenous researchers maintain that Indigenous people should be the ones to define themselves (Begay & Maryboy 1998; Horn 1996, p. 66; Smith 1999). For example, Navajo scholars Begay and Maryboy (1998, p. 186) recommend using 'age-old criteria, not an outside entity using non-native criteria such as blood quantum or who signed or did not sign what papers when'.

Non-Indigenous researchers continue to exert a considerable amount of control over Indigenous identities. A great deal of public opinion and many policies regarding Indigenous peoples are based on Western research findings. Yet the research is often implemented using Westernised definitions that limit Indigenous identity. For example, many social science researchers make decisions regarding who to interview and how to conduct research based on socialised assumptions about what constitutes a 'real' Indigenous person. Some Western researchers ignore Indigenous concepts of identity, refusing to interview Indigenous people unless they conform to Western stereotypes (Deloria Jr. 1969; Smith 1999. pp. 72-74). Other scholars project Western concepts of human behaviour onto Indigenous people, suppressing Indigenous conceptualisations of what it means to be a human being (Armstrong & Smith 1999).

Racism is also apparent within the structure of universities which fragments formal knowledge into separate disciplines, thus obscuring the interconnections that characterise Indigenous research (Duran & Duran 1995, pp. 18-19). Maori scholar Linda Tuwahai Smith explains that such approaches are racist in that they largely silence Indigenous epistemologies within formal research.

> The form that racism takes inside a university is related to the ways in which academic knowledge is structured as well as to the organizational structures which govern a university. The insulations of disciplines, the culture of the institution which supports disciplines, and the systems of management and governance all work in ways which protect the privileges already in place...(Smith 1999, p. 133).

Other researchers maintain that gatekeepers such as editors of professional journals and conference convenors marginalise dissenting research voices (Rigney 1998;

Stanfield II 1993, p. 13a). Often Indigenous researchers presenting competing paradigms and methodologies find their arguments labelled as 'biased' or 'not rigorous' (Deloria Jr. 1995, pp. 42-43).

Colonial Impact on Research: Eurocentric frameworks

> To assume that phenomena from another worldview can be adequately explained from a totally foreign worldview is the essence of psychological and philosophical imperialism (Duran & Duran 1995, p. 25).

In universities, researchers are required to link their findings back to established disciplines within the academic community. However, research has privileged Western ontologies and epistemologies, thereby marginalising many Indigenous paradigms (Stanfield II 1998, pp. 346-354; Deloria Jr.1969, pp. 78-100; Smith 1999, pp. 58-72). Indigenous writings form only a small percentage of academic texts and journals. Thus, when Indigenous researchers wish to set their work within a larger framework, most often they are required to do so within Western paradigms (Rigney 1998; Stanfield II 1998, p. 338-346). Requiring Indigenous research to be based on Eurocentric frameworks continues the skewing and silencing of Indigenous paradigms (Churchill 1996; Meyer 1998a; Rigney 1998; Stanfield II 1998; Smith 1999). Such processes have been labelled 'contributionist' in that they

> ...seek to bring about the inclusion of non-Europeans and/or non-European achievements in canonical subject matters, while leaving the methodological and conceptual parameters of the canon itself essentially intact (Churchill 1996, p. 272).

An example of the ways in which Indigenous researchers often are forced to distort their experience to fit within formal academic research paradigms may be found in the introduction to Eduardo and Bonnie Duran's seminal text, *Native American Postcolonial Psychology*. Eduardo explains that in writing his doctoral thesis, he

> was constrained by the rules of dissertation writing and had to comply with an Institutional lack of understanding for many things that are true and real to us and to other Native American people (Duran & Duran 1995, p. xv).

Thus he co-authored a text that more accurately described his epistemology 'in order to deconstruct some of the subjective assumptions of the Western mind-set' (Duran & Duran 1995, p. xv).

Forcing Indigenous researchers to fit their approach within Western paradigms ignores the cultural foundations of research paradigms, thus perpetuating colonisation. All modes of scientific thought are culturally based, yet many Western researchers continue to conduct research as though the cultural foundations of their paradigms and methodologies were universal (Stanfield II 1998, 346-354). Because the cultural biases of the dominant Western society often remain at the implicit level, Western researchers continue to impose their worldview on research involving Indigenous scholars, forcing Indigenous research to fit within Western paradigms.

Therefore, both issues of difference in worldview and differences in power to proselytise one's worldview impact upon research involving Indigenous peoples. In the following quotation, Native American scholars Eduardo and Bonnie Duran explain the power inherent in the hegemony of Western research paradigms:

> Early on, we began to realize that much of the study of cross-cultural issues and the resultant literature was primarily an exercise that had to be validated by the rules of the academy. It did not take a great revelation to discover that the people who made up the rules of this academy were predominantly white males. In this sense, knowledge from a cross-cultural perspective must become a caricature of the culture in order for it to be validated as science or knowledge (Duran & Duran 1995, p. 4).

Colonial Impact on Research: Silencing the Sacred

The colonial and imperial processes of fragmentation were designed to disconnect Indigenous peoples from the integral role of spirituality in their formalised systems of knowledge production (Smith 1999, p 74). The colonisers considered the spiritual foundations of Indigenous epistemologies to be primitive and heathen, and cruelly silenced them (Deloria Jr. 1973). The silencing of Indigenous spirituality as an acceptable part of social science research continues today (Smith 1999, p. 74; Stanfield II 1998, pp. 351-354). Thus many experiences that Indigenous peoples consider to be integral to their experience are excluded from social science research. This silencing of the sacred aspects of Indigenous experience has resulted in data that is incomplete and inaccurate:

> It has always been the norm in the social sciences to assume that Eurocentric empirical realities can be generalized to explain the realities of people of color...for decades, researchers steeped in Eurocentric norms have applied Eurocentric concepts of families,

> deviance, social movements...even spirituality to the experiences of people of color. This has occurred to such an extent that our social science knowledge of the indigenous senses of people of color is actually quite sparse and superficial (Stanfield II 1993b, pp. 27-28).

Colonial Impact on Research: Researcher as Coloniser

Western researchers, the predominance of which have been white males, often obscure their cultural background, thus perpetuating scientific paradigms that address white male perceptions of reality (Duran & Duran 1995). However, a growing number of researchers maintain that the researchers' worldview shapes methodology in significant ways (Begay & Maryboy 1998; Cajete 2000; Churchill 1996; Stanfield II 1993, 1998). The worldview underlying a researcher's culture shapes conceptualisations of acceptable data sources as well as acceptable methodologies (Stanfield II 1998, p. 334). Western researchers who continue to avoid transparency regarding their own cultural background and worldview continue colonial practice of failing to acknowledge the existence of other ontologies and epistemologies, assuming that theirs is the only reality.

Researcher transparency is particularly important in regard to Indigenous knowledge management issues in formal research. In many Indigenous ways of managing knowledge, information is not just given to anyone, it is given to a particular person in a specific way (Ross 1996; Peat 1994). Therefore, who the researcher is, or reveals themselves to be, plays a strong role in the information Indigenous participants choose to share. Researchers who maintain a detached stance that veils their identity and background continue to colonise research by restricting the information Indigenous people need to make informed decisions regarding research participation.

Colonial Impact: The Colonisation of Language Usage

The hegemony of Western academic language in formal research also impacts upon Indigenous peoples. In most formal research, Indigenous researchers are required to express themselves in the language of Western academic discourse (Meyer 1998a; Stanfield II 1993a, pp. 11-12). However, formalised academic language is most often dispassionate, highly coded insider language, indecipherable to many of the Indigenous people whose daily lives are greatly affected by formal research (Huggins 1998, pp. 71-77). Furthermore, the language of most academic

research is far removed from Indigenous peoples' everyday experience of passion and pain. When researchers write in a style that distances discourse from emotion, they silence the real life impact of Indigenous people's affective experience. Such alienating discourse is inadequate in research involving Indigenous peoples (Huggins 1998, pp. 71-77; Meyer 1998a, p. 3). Stanfield II describes the ways in which academic discourse misrepresents the experience of Indigenous peoples:

> In qualitative research, the leeway given to subjects to speak their minds, to speak from their hearts, is translated and reproduced in the language of the academic elite...researchers must report their findings using professional discourse styles that are understood and rewarded by their peers. Writing in the discourse style of the racially oppressed is viewed as unprofessional...This is tragic, because the conservative character of professional jargon, particularly about racial issues, often stifles if not outright destroys the passion that is an important element for understanding the complex depths of race, racism, ethnicity, and ethnocentrism (Stanfield II 1993, pp. 11).

Colonial Impact on Research: Colonised Minds

Colonisation also shapes research conducted by Indigenous scholars. Indigenous researchers who implement Indigenist paradigms and methodologies express the difficulty of recognising and dealing with the effects of Westernisation upon their own research skills (Duran & Duran 1995; Meyer 1998, p. 9; Smith 1999, pp. 69-72). They express the challenges involved in successfully implementing Indigenist research within Western research institutions while they carry unrecognised assumptions based on Western worldview. Many Indigenous researchers speak of their own 'colonised minds' and the subtle ways in which they inadvertently support colonisation within research (Duran & Duran 1995, pp. 6-7; Myer 1998, p. 9; Schaef 1992 ; Smith 1999, p. 23). Others speak of the ways in which mechanistic Cartesian/Newtonian scientific principles have shaped the minds of generations of Indigenous students educated in Western institutions. For example, Gregory Cajete describes the ways in which Indigenous minds are colonised through the imposition of Cartesian worldview:

> That was the mind that was forcibly overlaid onto native consciousness with the coming of conquistadors, missionaries and later, educators. There was no one on the native side to clarify the differences between native and Cartesian world views (Cajete 2000, pp. 219-220).

Ward Churchill, Cherokee scholar, describes Western universities' curricula as 'white studies', maintaining that Western academia perpetuates the belief in only one definition of science. He further explains the ways in which 'white studies' colonise Indigenous students' minds:

> the purpose of White Studies... is to trick the colonized into materially supporting his/her colonisation through the mechanisms of his/her thought processes (Churchill 1996, p. 277).

Summary

The processes of colonisation that exercise control over Indigenous identity and regulate Indigenous knowledge production continue to impact upon research involving Indigenous peoples. Within the Western research community, Indigenous people have experienced little acceptance of their own paradigms and methodologies (Begay & Maryboy 1998; Cajete 2000; Duran & Duran 1995; Whelshula 1999). However a new movement has emerged within social sciences in which Indigenous scholars are reclaiming the right to conduct research in ways that privilege Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies. This new approach has been called both *Indigenist* research and *decolonising* research (Churchill 1996; Rigney 1998; Smith 1999). In the following section, I discuss the ways in which Indigenist research decolonises current Western research. I also provide an analysis of the central characteristics of Indigenist research.

Decolonising Research: Indigenist Approaches

> It is time for Native voices, imagery and words to expose the festering wounds of colonial influence, to direct our research in ways that are important to us, and to enter into dialogue without the burden of self-inflicted compromise (Meyer 1998a, p. xiii).

Some Indigenous researchers are conducting research that decolonises Eurocentric methodologies, that gives voice to Indigenous paradigms and epistemologies which have previously been silenced within Western academia (Begay & Maryboy 1998; Duran & Duran 1995; Meyer 1998a; Rigney 1998; Smith 1999; Whelshula 1999). Research has become a site of resistance to further colonisation as Indigenous people reject what they consider to be inappropriate epistemologies and methodologies (Duran & Duran 1995; Meyer 1998a; Rigney 1998; Smith 1999). There is an emerging body of literature that supports the

effectiveness of research paradigms and methodologies grounded in Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies (Begay & Maryboy 1998; Duran & Duran 1995, p. 8; Whelshula 1999).

Indigenist scholars maintain that methodologies and paradigms based on Indigenous worldviews improve social science research regarding Indigenous peoples (Churchill 1996; Rigney 1998; Smith 1999, Stanfield II 1998). Research conducted within Indigenous paradigms more accurately expresses Indigenous experience and meaning, thus encouraging deeper community involvement in and commitment to research processes, as well as to decisions based on research findings (Churchill 1996; Meyer 1998a; Rigney 1998; Smith 1999).

Indigenist research is defined as research that is grounded in Indigenous conceptions of worldview (Churchill 1996, pp. 278-286; Smith 1999 p. 146). In privileging Indigenous worldview, Indigenist methodologies move Indigenous ways of knowing from the margins to the centre of academic research. Furthermore, Indiginist research involves the use of Indigenous paradigms rather than drawing solely on Western paradigms (Churchill 1996, pp. 278-286). However, Indigenist research does not totally disavow Western paradigms and methodologies. For example, Lester Rigney (1997), Aboriginal Australian scholar, describes his *Indigenist* research as combining the Western critical paradigm with Indigenous ways of managing knowledge.

Central Characteristics of Indigenist Research

A growing number of Indigenous scholars are conducting research that privileges aspects of Indigenous worldview. They stress paradigms for conducting research *with* Indigenous peoples rather than *on* Indigenous peoples. In research methodologies in which Indigenous ways of knowing becoming central, the following characteristics are emphasised:

- Interconnectedness
- Focus on process and relationships
- Inclusion of spiritual experience
- Expanded definitions of empirical data

In the following subsections, I discuss these central characteristics of Indigenist research.

Characteristics of Indigenist Research: Interconnectedness

Indigenous epistemologies are characterised by interconnections between people, knowledge and the natural world (Duran & Duran 1995, p. 15). Interrelatedness of all aspects of experience is an integral concept in Indigenist research, in contrast to analytical Western social science research, which tends to analyse data in isolation (Begay & Maryboy 1998, pp. 69-73). In the worldview underlying Native American Indigenist research,

> All things are interrelated. Everything in the universe is part of a single whole. Everything is connected in some way to everything else. It is therefore possible to understand something only if we can understand how it is connected to everything else (Bopp et al. 1989).

In methodologies based on concepts of interconnectedness, research is designed to recognise and support interconnections rather than analyse isolated bits of data. In writing about Native science, Rupert Ross (1996, p. 63) explains that

> ...there has been a different *emphasis* between Western and Indigenous science. Indigenous science places the primary emphasis on studying the *relationships* between things.

Indigenist research also emphasises connections within human beings. For example, Indigenist research considers mind, body, emotion and spirit to be integral aspects of human experience (Begay & Maryboy 1998; Cajete 2000, p. 2; Ghostkeeper 2001). Native Hawaiian scholar Mariluani Meyer gives examples of these interconnections within her research on Native Hawaiian epistemology.

> Hawaiian philosophy of knowledge recognizes the non-dual and whole nature of what is considered "intellect"... We are not simply "head thinkers" but our bodies, our larger sense of otherness, our culture, directs us (Meyer 1997).

Indigenist methodologies also emphasise interconnections between the researcher and the research participants (Cajete 2000, p. 66). In Indigenist research, for example, skilled data interpretation occurs within relationship rather than in isolation (Begay & Maryboy 1998, pp. 50-55; Smith 1999, p. 148). Meyer (1998a, p.135) explains the importance of relationship in Hawaiian epistemology:

> It was stunning to continually hear how wisdom, intelligence and "smartness" were tied to connectability and relationship. As if being intelligent is impossible outside a context of other.

Making and nurturing connections between researcher and participants is an important aspect of decolonising methodologies.

Recognising interconnections between researcher and research participants implies responsibility on the part of the researcher to ensure ethical involvement in the issues being studied. Decolonising research involves sensitivity to the impact of research methodology upon the people involved. Knowledge that breaks the awareness of interconnectedness with others is considered to be worthless or harmful and is to be avoided in research involving Indigenous peoples (Meyer 1998a; Smith 1999).

Indigenist researchers position themselves in ways that support good relationships with research participants and other community members (Smith 1999, p.148). Thus Indigenist research requires a consideration of what each group of Indigenous people considers to be ethical behaviour in regard to research. Some processes that Indigenist researchers consider to be ethical include seeking the approval of elders, following protocols for proper behaviour in Indigenous communities, developing sensitivity to differences in communication style, and developing appropriate ways of sharing knowledge (Begay & Maryboy 1998; Deloria Jr. 1999; Meyer 1998a; Smith 1999).

The Indigenist concept of interconnectedness of researcher and research participants includes the concept of reciprocity. Knowledge and understanding gained from the research participants implies a responsibility on the part of the researcher to use that information in ways that supports group aspirations and values. In Indigenous paradigms, knowledge is considered to be a gift to which those involved are expected to respond in ways that demonstrate responsibility (Meyer 1998a, p. 116; Whitt 1997).

In Indigenist research, researchers seek ways in which both data and findings are shared with the participants of the research project (Begay & Maryboy 1998; Smith 1999). At the end of the research project, the participants are also involved in ongoing discussions of how the research findings are to be utilised. Rather than the relationship being terminated when the findings are released in final form, Indigenist researchers and participants work toward sharing the processing and dissemination of the findings. A failure to respond to participants regarding knowledge dissemination is considered by many Indigenous people to be 'stealing

knowledge', and such perceptions fuel continued Indigenous resistance to formal research (Smith 1999, p. 176).

Characteristics of Indigenist Research: Focus on Process and Relationships

> The perspective of Native science goes beyond objective measurement, honoring the primacy of direct experience, interconnectedness, relationship, holism, quality and value.... Concerned with the processes and energies within the universe, it continually deals in systems of relationships...(Cajete 2000, p. 66).

The practice of Indigenist research is conceptualised as ongoing processes characterised by flux rather than time-bounded implementation of techniques (Begay & Maryboy 1998, p.69; Cajete 2000, Duran & Duran 1995; Peat 1994, Smith 1999, p. 182). Indigenous science is based on a paradigm of creative, ever-changing process rather than absolute truth (LittleBear, cited in Cajete 2000, p. 1-19). Thus Native American research involves 'process thinking as opposed to the content thinking found in the Western worldview' (Duran & Duran 1995, p. 15).

The creative flux that characterises process within Indigenist research is exemplified in Indigenous conceptualisations of time. In Indigenist research, conceptualisations of time include *right time*, the time at which all factors indicate the situation is ready to support the action being contemplated. Rather than base research decisions solely upon calendar or clock deadlines, choices related to research process are made with regard to relationships with others and the natural world (Peat 1994, pp. 202-203). Meyer (1998a, p. 152) gives an example of *right time* in one of her reflective memos on her research thesis, 'Well, I have had to wait one week to write about this interview. Finally I can see, feel, and write. Before it was solid essence...'. Within the same memo, Meyer writes of the participants' responding in regard to 'the timing and sacredness of knowledge', of sharing information according to calculations of *right time*.

Characteristics of Indigenist Research: Expanded definitions of Empirical Data

> Cultural epistemology is no longer a novelty, it is a fact, and the time has come to expose its suppression... (Meyer 1998b, p. 40).

Culturally defined ways of knowing include definitions of what can be known, what is observable. In Western research paradigms, empirical data is often defined as data perceived by one or more of the five senses. Just as senses are defined differently in different cultures, empirical data is also defined differently in different cultures (Meyer 1998a, 1998b). Decolonising research involves redefining *empirical* to include senses that are integral to the experiences of Indigenous peoples. Indigenist scholars define empirical data as including experiences of dreams, visions, and environmental signs (Begay & Maryboy 1998, p. 203; Cajete 2000, pp. 75, 84-85; Meyer 1998b, p. 40).

Interpretation of sensory data is also a culturally mediated act (Meyer 1998a, pp. 34-40). For example, seeing a relative who has died and hearing the advice they have to offer is considered valuable information to many Indigenous people and such experiences are often included in Indigenous research, as Meyer explains:

> If one views a past relative not as a ghost, but as someone to help and guide them through life's problems and hardships...then when this person shows up....they will be welcomed and listened to. Such is the nature of ontological diversity (Meyer 1998b, p. 40).

In contrast, in mainstream Western society seeing and hearing dead people is almost always pathologised as drug induced psychosis or mental illness. In very few cases would information from deceased ancestors be considered acceptable research data within dominant Western research methodologies (Stanfield II 1998, p. 352).

Dreams are also a common source of information for many Indigenist researchers (Begay & Maryboy 1998; Cajete 2000, p. 84; Duran & Duran 1995). As such, dreams form an integral part of the experience of Indigenist researchers, as well as of Indigenous research participants (Meyer 1998a; Peat 1994). Indigenist researchers utilise information from dreams both to guide research projects and to assist in analysing data. (Ghostkeeper 2001; Meyer 1998a, p. 74)

Expanded Conceptualisations of Empirical Data: The natural world

> The most fundamental clash between Western and Indigenous belief systems...stems from a belief held by indigenous peoples that the earth is a living entity (Mander, cited in Smith 1999, p. 99).

Indigenous concepts of the natural world as a living system are reflected in Indigenist research (Deloria Jr. 1995, p. 55; Little Bear, cited in Cajete 2000, p. xi). Many examples of decolonising research involve participation with the natural

world (Cajete 2000, p. 2). However, dialogue with aspects of the natural world continues to be one of the aspects of Indigenous epistemologies that is the most silenced in formal research, as Cajete explains in his text *Native Science*.

> It is the depth of our ancient human participation with nature that has been lost and indeed must be regained in some substantial form in modern life and modern science. The cosmological and philosophical must once again become 'rooted' in a life-centered, lived experience of the natural world (Cajete 2000, p. 3).

An example of Indigenist researcher participation with land can be found in Manulani Aluli Meyer's (1998a, p. 70) doctoral research on Hawaiian epistemology. She describes land as a powerful influence within her interview process:

> I went to informants' homes and places of teaching...each site held an important message for this work; it was either the birth place, spiritual home, or place of responsibility for most of my informants...Each site spoke volumes...It is quite possible that the site was the interview. Place as passion. *Aina* as *kumupa'a, hupuna, aumakua* (Land as *foundation, elder, ancestor*).

Indigenist research does not privilege humans in relation to the natural world. Indeed, in many Indigenous worldviews humans are considered lower than other creatures, as can be seen in the following quote regarding First Nations peoples in Canada:

> The Aboriginal world-view holds that mankind (sic) is the least powerful and least important factor in creation...Mankind's interests are not to be placed above those of any other parts of Creation. In the matter of the hierarchy, or relative importance of beings within creation, Aboriginal and Western intellectual traditions are almost diametrically opposed (Sinclair, cited in Ross, 1996, p. 61).

In Indigenous worldviews in which there is no hierarchy of humans over nature, research data from the natural world is considered equally valid as information from other humans. For example, Deborah Bird Rose (1992) articulates the ontology of the Yarralin people of Australia who listen to the natural world as an integral part of their ways of knowing. 'In order to act responsibly humans and others must be constantly alert to the state of the systems of which they are a part' (Rose 1992, p. 225). Furthermore, many Indigenous peoples understand land and other living creatures to be studying humans (Meyer 1998a; Peat 1994; Rose 1992, p.228). For Indigenist researchers such interactions form an integral part of data collection and management.

Holistic Experience: Spiritual Experience

Whereas Western research is primarily secular, Indigenist research is 'inherently spiritual' (Begay & Maryboy 1998, p. 93). Most Indigenous peoples define spirituality as different from the dogma that characterises many religions. Meyer (1998a, p. 23) defines spirituality within research as:

> ...a way of discussing the organic and cultural mediation of experience, and hence knowledge, and should not be expected to conform to religious structure....It is not a separate 'thing' to be studied, but a deeply embedded notion of the connectedness of things, gods, people and land.

Many Indigenist scholars such as Duran and Duran (1995, p. 44), Meyer (1998c, pp. 22-23), Walker (1998b, pp. 15-17) and Whelshula (1999) openly acknowledge the fundamental role of spirituality in formal research. Meyer (1998a) speaks of the importance that her research respondents gave to the spiritual aspects of their experience. In describing her interview process, she relates,

> A spiritual context was first to surface in the literature review and during interviews. Spiritual beliefs and practices began, ended and shaped most sessions. Each interview started with *pule*, with prayer...most mentors spoke of where their inspiration flowed and the theme of spirituality was by far the largest of all seven categories. Inevitably, *every* mentor spoke and lingered within the arena of how knowledge is affected, acquired and shaped by spiritual forces (Meyer 1998a, pp. 99-100).

The articulation of spirituality within research is also a site of resistance to the silencing of Indigenous worldview. Because the processes of colonisation repressed Indigenous spirituality so severely, its revival as part of formal research is of particular significance to many Indigenist scholars (Duran & Duran 1995). In the following quotation, Maori scholar Linda Tuwahai Smith describes the importance of interweaving spirituality throughout Indigenist research:

> The arguments of different indigenous peoples based on spiritual relationships to the universe, to the landscape and to stones, rocks, insects and other things, seen and unseen, have been difficult arguments for Western systems of knowledge to deal with or accept. These arguments give a partial indication of the different world views and alternative ways of coming to know, and of being, which still endure within the indigenous world. Concepts of spirituality which Christianity attempted to destroy, then to appropriate, and then to claim, are critical sites of resistance for indigenous peoples. The values, attitudes, concepts and language embedded in beliefs about spirituality represent, in many cases, the clearest contrast and mark of

> difference between indigenous peoples and the West (Smith 1999, p. 74).

Summary

In this section, I have discussed the central characteristics of Indigenist research: an emphasis on interconnectedness; a focus on process and relationships; expanded conceptualisations of empirical experience; and the inclusion of spiritual experience. These different methodological approaches also call for different methods of evaluating research. In the following subsection, I briefly discuss Indigenist conceptualisations of evaluating research.

Evaluating Indigenist research

Many expressions of Indigenist research are challenged by Western scholars as lacking validity and rigour (Rigney 1998; Smith 1999; Stanfield II 1998). In response, Indigenist researchers argue for new definitions of accountability within research involving Indigenous peoples. Indigenist researchers maintain that measures of accountability cannot be restricted to those derived from Western worldview, arguing that measures of accountability must include the same characteristics as Indigenist research (Begay & Maryboy 1998; Meyer 1998a; Smith 1999). For example, Indigenist researchers define accountability measures as addressing on-going processes of interrelationships that serve the community (Begay & Maryboy 1998, p. 57). More meaningful evaluation of Indigenist research would include its persuasiveness to the Indigenous communities it represents, as explained in Begay and Maryboy's doctoral dissertation:

> In the native way of thinking, verification and validity, as we have already mentioned, are generated through affirmation and attestation of integrity from the native community...In traditional communities, this validation is given through formal, informal, cultural and spiritual means...Thus, for the native researcher in an academic setting, two dimensions of validation may exist: the western...and the traditional. In accordance with the traditional dimension, reliability can be acquired experientially, intuitively and ultimately spiritually. The integrity of this kind of knowledge is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to analyze or validate by outside western research methods (Begay & Maryboy 1998, pp.133-134).

Indigenist scholars also apply the concept of rigour in new ways in decolonising research. Rather than applying measures of rigor to intellect only, Indigenist scholars measure rigour in relation to the research project's ability to maintain and

strengthen interrelatedness, as well as to create positive social change (Meyer 1998, Smith 1999, pp. 172-175).

> It is time to... confirm and validate other ways of knowing that are more empowering, more meaningful, more fun, and more rigorous in the kinds of ways that engender community, extend culture, and strengthen commitment to the things and ways of value (Meyer 1998b, p. 40).

Indigenist researchers also articulate new ways of interpreting data. Rather than emphasising processes that fragment in order to facilitate analysis, they stress processes that stress the interconnections between perceived themes and patterns (Begay & Maryboy 1998; Smith 1999). These interconnections include mutual processes of change that occur both within the researcher's experience and within the research data, as Meyer describes in the following quotation:

> Analysing data was not something I did at once, or after all interviews were finished. The "Analysis" of data was actually something that I felt was done "through" me. Interviews became metaphoric rivers that helped shape the rock of my own character. Thinking about what was shared during the interviews changed the timing to my step, the things I focused on, and the way I viewed the world (Meyer 1998a, p. 74).

Summary

Although they are often described as the most researched people in the world, Indigenous peoples find little value in formal Western research. They claim that formal research has had little positive effect upon their lives, and in many instances has resulted in policies that have made their lives worse (Deloria Jr. 1969, pp. 78-100; Rigney 1998; Smith 1999). In contrast, Indigenous peoples are more accepting of research that involves methodologies congruent with their worldview, values and goals (Meyer 1998a; Smith 1999). Indigenist research therefore provides a way of implementing research in ways that are more accurate, more meaningful, and more valid in relation to Indigenous peoples.

Conclusion

Within this chapter, I have reviewed the literature regarding both the colonisation and the decolonisation of formal academic research in Western societies. I have also discussed some of the central characteristics and purposes of

Indigenist research, thereby providing theoretical support for the Indigenist methodology I employ throughout my research.

I also want to join other Indigenist researchers who contend that decolonisation of research does not require abandoning Western paradigms and methodologies, nor establishing an inverse hierarchy in which Indigenous methodologies are considered superior to all Western approaches. Rather Indigenist researchers recommend founding methodologies upon Indigenous knowledge while utilising them in ways that communicate with Western knowledge (Cajete 2000, p. 7; Rigney 1998, Smith 1999).

> One of the challenges... is to develop ways in which there can be an integration, or a harmonising of Indigenous... knowledge and practices with western scientific knowledge. In this way, rather than being considered as conflicting systems, Indigenous knowledge systems and western scientific knowledge can be combined in a way which utilises the characteristics of two different systems in a complementary, mutually reinforcing way. Such an integrated knowledge system can be developed in order to pursue knowledge in a mutually reinforcing way (Davis 1987, p. 20).

Indigenist researchers are developing ways of positioning themselves that recognise the interplay between Western and Indigenous ways of knowing. Meyer (1998a, p. 11) explains that she considers herself to be a *critical organic catalyst*, staying attuned to what the dominant culture can offer that is of benefit to Native peoples, while at the same time supporting other research that maintains Native culture.

There is also support within the wider research community for Indigenous paradigms that decolonise research. Yvonna Lincoln (1993, p. 30) suggests that it is just such emergent approaches to research that will provide the methods and theories that enable Indigenous and other marginalised peoples to more adequately express their experience. Rather than essentialise Indigenist research into isolated paradigms and methodologies, a growing number of researchers such as Peat (1994), Reason (1993), Ross (1996) and Schaef (1992) are engaged in collaboration between Indigenist and Western emergent paradigm research. In the following chapter, I analyse Western emergent research paradigms and methodologies that exhibit interconnectedness, spiritual foundations, an emphasis on process, and expanded definitions of empirical data. Both Indigenist and Western scholars of

emergent paradigm research have informed my approach of *interconnected knowing*, which integrates Indigenous and Western epistemologies.

CHAPTER SIX

BORDER CROSSINGS: WESTERN SUPPORT FOR THE PRINCIPLES OF INDIGENIST RESEARCH

In this chapter, I discuss the works of Western scholars such as Peile (1994), Moustakas (1990) and Reinharz (1979) whose research reflects many of the same central characteristics as Indigenist research. They do not, however, acknowledge the interconnections between Indigenous and Western epistemologies. Another group of scholars, including Peat (1994) and Suzuki & Knudson (1992) explicitly acknowledge the points at which Western and Indigenous science meet. These border crossings of Indigenous and Western epistemologies represent sites of interparadigmatic dialogue.

In the first section of this chapter, I briefly discuss the parallels between an emergent Western paradigm, Peile's (1994) creative paradigm, and Native American and Aboriginal Australian paradigms. In the second section, I analyse Western emergent paradigm research in relation to the four central characteristics of Indigenist research, maintaining that the similarities between them provide space for interparadigmatic dialogue.

Interparadigmatic Support for Indigenist Research

In this section, I discuss ways in which an emergent Western paradigm provides theoretical support for Indigenist research. Emergent paradigm research is defined as research that suggests a new ontology and epistemology, but has not been extensively articulated and supported within Western research literature (Peile 1994; Schaef 1992). In discussing Western scholars' support of the principles of Indigenist research, I do not intend to suggest that Indigenist research needs validation through Western science. In contrast, I provide interparadigmatic support in order to develop a dialogue between Indigenous and Western science, as recommended in the work of Indigenist scholars Gregory Cajete (2000) and Vine Deloria Jr. (1999).

An in-depth consideration of the similarities between Native American, Aboriginal Australian and emergent Western paradigms would involve a complex analysis which would need a separate thesis devoted entirely to that topic. Within

this chapter I only make brief comparisons in an effort to establish the interparadigmatic dialogue between Indigenous paradigms and emergent Western paradigms that served as a basis for my methodology.

As can be seen in the table on the following page, the creative paradigm, Native American paradigm and Australian Aboriginal paradigm have similar ontological, epistemological, political and spiritual characteristics. The interconnections between these paradigms suggest the existence of an as yet unnamed metaparadigm, which enfolds these three paradigms.

In column one of the following chart, I list the characteristics of a Western emergent paradigm, Peile's (1994) creative paradigm. In columns two and three, I list the characteristics of Native American and Aboriginal Australian paradigms. When designing my methodology, I devised methods that supported the assumptions of these three paradigms.

Paradigmatic Assumptions	The Creative Paradigm	Native American Paradigm	Aboriginal Australian Paradigm
Ontological	Everything is part of an undivided inseparable whole. The whole is holographically enfolded within every part and each part enfolds every other part. Creativity is the fundamental process of all reality...Mind and body, matter and consciousness, are inseparable aspects of an individual whole which holographically enfold each other (Peile 1994, p. 279)	All things are interrelated. Everything in the universe is part of a single whole... All of creation is in a state of constant change. Nothing stays the same except the presence of cycle upon cycle of change. (Bopp et al. 1989, pp 26-27)	Each part is both part of the total system and a system in itself (Rose 1984, p. 221). ...all parts of the cosmos are related to other parts (Rose 1984, p. 29).
Epistemological	Knowledge arises via synthethic insight where this knowledge forms an inseparable creative aspect of reality (Peile 1994, p. 279).	Everything is connected in some way to everything else. It is therefore possible to understand something only if we can understand how it is connected to everything else. (Bopp et al. 1989, p. 26)	...knowledge originates in the complex unbounded web of metaphors, drawn from the land, animals and the body, and handed down by the ancestors.... Knowledge making can be posited as a negotiation of metaphors which will help us to share and understand our... partial perspectives (Christie 1992, p. 22).
Political	The aim of relationships with others is creative mutual dialogue. It seeks to challenge the processes of fragmentation and the self-deceptive perception of control through a process of synthesis, insight and mutual dialogue (Peile 1994, p. 279).	All the races and the tribes in the world are like the different coloured flowers of one meadow. All are beautiful. As children of the Creator they must all be respected (Bopp et al. 1989, p. 80).	No part of the system is subservient to, or dominated by, any other part... each part of the system must pay attention, and respond, to other parts (Rose 1984, p. 30).
Spiritual	It has been suggested that God could be equated with the implicate whole and is therefore enfolded in everything (Peile 1994, p. 279).	The spiritual dimension of human development may be understood in terms of the capacity to respond to realities that exist in a non-material way such as dreams, visions and spiritual teachings (Bopp et al. 1989, p. 30).	Spiritual existence is not divorced from the material world, but embedded in it. People and nature are one... (Tripcony 1997).

Interparadigmatic Dialogue

As can be seen from the previous table, the central characteristics of Peile's creative paradigm are markedly similar to those of Native American and Australian Aboriginal paradigms. Although in Western science the creative paradigm is emerging as a new theoretical framework, for centuries Indigenous science has implemented the same conceptualisations of reality as interconnected, creative flux. Although Peile (1994, p. 125) does not clearly articulate the connections between the creative paradigm and Indigenous paradigms, he states that some characteristics of the creative paradigm 'can be traced back to antiquity'.

Peile describes his paradigm as based on conceptualisations of the *holomovment,* a construct drawn from theoretical physics (Bohm 1980). Within *holomovement* research, knowledge develops through a flowing, constantly cycling movement between implicit and explicit experience (Peile 1994). The cyclical interconnections of *holomovement* paradigms stress participation and co-creative change (Peile 1994; Schaef 1992, p. 198).

A growing number of both Indigenist scholars such as Begay & Maryboy (1998), Cajete (2000) and Schaef (1992) as well as Western scholars such as Peile (1994) and Suzuki and Knudson (1992) also describe methodology based on the *holomovement. Holomovement* research is characterised by co-creative process, thus reflecting one of the central characteristics of Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies (Begay & Maryboy 1998, p. 292; Cajete 2000, pp. 13-14).

Along with Indigenist scholars, Peile (1994) describes an ontology in which all things are interconnected. He specifically addresses the capacity of the creative paradigm to address interconnections between different research paradigms.

> The creative approach...encourages a different type of dialogue which embraces the differences between one's own views and another's. The creative approach embraces this difference because it creates the potential for a future synthesis (Peile 1994, pp. 64).

Peile (1994) questions why human society has resisted the creative paradigm. I maintain that not all human societies have resisted creative paradigms. For centuries, Indigenous societies have integrated ontologies and epistemologies similar to that of Peile's (1994) creative paradigm. I maintain that it is dominant Western society that in large part has resisted creative *holomovement* paradigms.

In *holomovement* paradigms, all things are enfolded into each other. Indeed, Indigenist scholars maintain that Western science is enfolded in Native science (Cajete 2000, p. 2). In the following section I discuss the ways in which the central characteristics of emergent paradigm research are enfolded within Indigenist research.

Comparison of Characteristics of Emergent Paradigm Research and Indigenist Paradigm Research

A growing number of Western scholars advocate the integration of research that is characterised by principles similar to those of Indigenist research. This new body of research has been described as *emergent paradigm research* (Peile 1994, p. 125). In addition to Peile's work, I discuss other scholars of emergent paradigm research, notably Moustakas (1990), Peat (1994), Reason (1993), Reinharz (1979) and McClintock (cited in Keller 1983). In the following subsections I discuss Western emergent paradigm research in regard to Indigenist research's central characteristics of:

- Interconnectedness
- Emphasis on process and relationships
- Integration of spiritual aspects of experience
- Inclusion of expanded conceptualisations of data

I maintain that the similarities in the central characteristics of both emergent paradigm and Indigenist research create space for interparadigmatic dialogue within formal academic research.

Interconnectedness

> Everything is part of an inseparable undivided whole... The whole is holographically enfolded or implicit within every part... Knowledge of the whole can be uncovered by holographic insight into a part (Peile1994, pp. 273-274).

As explained in Chapter Five, one of the central characteristics of Indigenist research is the interconnectedness of all aspects of research. A growing number of Western scholars of emergent paradigm research have also begun to stress the general concept of interconnectedness in research. Barbara McClintock (cited in Keller 1983, pp. 204), Nobel Prize winning biologist, defines interconnectedness as the basis of effective research:

> Basically everything is one. There is no way in which you draw a line between things. What we [normally] do is full of subdivisions that are artificial, that shouldn't be there.

In the following subsections, I discuss Western emergent paradigm research in relation to interconnections between

- researcher and research data
- researcher and research participants
- bodily, intellectual, spiritual and emotional experience.

Interconnectedness between Researcher and Data

A growing number of Western scholars such as Moustakas (1990), Peile (1994, p. 179), Reason (1993), and Reinharz (1979) stress the interrelatedness of researcher and research data. They incorporate research processes in which the researcher's formal study and personal experience shape the data, and in turn are shaped by the data.

In interconnected research processes, self-reflexivity becomes an essential part of the research. Acknowledging interconnections between the researcher's experience and the data provides a more accurate representation of research processes (Lincoln & Denzin 1998). McClintock (cited in Keller 1983, p. 117) describes research processes in which she acknowledges interconnectedness between herself and the nuclei of the corn plants she was studying.

> ...when I was really working with them I wasn't outside, I was down there. I was part of the system. I was right down there with them, and everything got big. I even was able to see the internal parts of the chromosomes-actually everything was there. It surprised me because I actually felt as if I were right down there and these were my friends.

In emergent paradigm research based on the *holomovement*, the relationship between researcher and research data might be described as a co-creative process through which both the researcher and the data are changed (Peile 1994; Moustakas 1990; Reinharz 1979; Schaef 1992). In research that emphasises interconnectedness, researchers participate in processes of co-creative change rather than attempting to control the data. This co-creative process has been described as 'dancing with the data', as the researcher seems to lead the research process at times, and at other times the data seems to direct the process (Peile 1999). Research experiences in which the data directs the process may lead to creative integration of

data, as McClintock (cited in Keller 1983, p. 125) describes in regard to her highly acclaimed work in genetics:

> You let the material tell you where to go, and it tells you at every step what the next has to be because you're integrating with an overall brand new pattern in mind. You're not following an old one; you are convinced of a new one. And you let everything you do focus on that. You can't help it because it all integrates.

Throughout my research process, I found myself extremely challenged when the data was leading the process. I did not understand what to do in such situations and often felt frustrated and incompetent. From my initial literature review and through dialogue with other scholars, I had come to understand competent researchers as being in control of designing and modifying their methodology. I read articles which recommended methodological flexibility in which the researcher could and should change methodologies if such a change would increase the validity of the research process (Moustakas 1990; Reinharz 1979). However, I read very little about allowing the data itself to lead the analysis and synthesis phases of the research process. The work of Schaef (1992), McClintock (cited in Keller, 1983) and Peile (1994) assisted in my attempts to relinquish control of the research processes and participate in them instead. This flexibility allowed me to integrate data that I was aware was important in both the research experience and the experience of conflict transformation but did not fit neatly within traditional research paradigms.

Interconnectedness of Researcher and Participants

Emergent paradigm research also emphasises the interconnectedness of researcher and research participants (Peile 1994; Moustakas 1990, p. 12). Scholars of emergent paradigm research stress 'the importance of living lives close enough to the lives written about to begin to understand their realities' (Lincoln & Denzin 1998, p. 421). By participating in experiences similar to those of participants, researchers engaged in co-creative research processes identify more closely with the common human experience of the research participants (LeCompte 1993, pp. 11-16; Moustakas 1990, pp. 12-15; Reinharz 1979).

Peile (1994) describes participants and researcher as parts of 'an undivided whole' that sustains the unity of interconnected research experience. In studying participant's experiences, the researcher understands more of his or her own

experience (Moustakas 1990, p. 32; Peile 1994). Conversely, by studying one's own experience, a researcher develops a deeper understanding of participants' experiences. Then through a synthesis of both aspects of experience, a researcher develops a clearer understanding of human experience in general (Moustakas 1990, pp. 12-15; Peile 1994).

In emergent paradigm research, the researcher and research participants recognise their shared humanness. Some feminist researchers describe this type of research as *connected knowing* in which researchers exhibit passionate caring toward the research participants (Belenky et al.1986; Reinharz 1979, pp. 9-10). In such approaches, research is conducted with respect and trust of participant's expressions of their experience (Belenky et al. 1986).

In research based on interconnectedness, the researcher takes participant's interests and values into consideration. This collaborative approach is in contrast to the majority of Western research in which researchers analyse the data in isolation, having no further contact with the participants beyond data collection. Non-collaborative research that neglects the interconnections between researcher and participants is often described as 'mining or rape' (Reinharz 1979, p. 95), or 'soft-raiding' (Prechtel 1999).

Interconnectedness of Mind, Body, Spirit and Emotion

Emergent paradigm research emphasises interconnectedness of many aspects of human experience, describing the integration of body, mind, spirit and emotion (Moustakas 1990, pp. 16 & 97; Reason 1993; Schaef 1992). Emergent research on qualitative methodologies describes high quality research as the integration of 'tacit, intuitive, emotional and historical aspects of participant's experience' (Lincoln & Denzin 1998, p. 422). Shulamit Reinharz (1979, p. 33) further explains the importance of methodologies that support interconnectedness of the researcher's experience: 'It must not split my consciousness but permit me to be whole'.

Summary

Western researchers' support for interconnectedness in research provides space within academia for Indigenist scholars who emphasise interconnections. Both Indigenist and Western scholars of emergent paradigm research stress the importance of conducting research in ways that acknowledge interconnections,

rather than forcing a fit between the data and traditional Western methodologies (Reinharz 1979; Reason 1993; Schaef 1992). The work of the scholars discussed in this chapter encouraged me to include the aspects of interconnectedness that were not typically included in formal academic research yet fit within my value and belief system as an Indigenist scholar.

Focus on Process

Emergent paradigm scholars describe research as a flowing, constantly changing participatory process rather than fixed techniques (Peile 1994; Moustakas 1990; Schaef 1992). The concept of a *holomovement*, which was introduced in Chapter Five, provides an explanation of research process as co-creative movement between the explicit, readily observable aspects of experience and the implicit, largely unconscious aspects of experience (Peile 1994).

As described by Peile (1994, p. 182), the creative paradigm is a *process of knowing* in which research processes are described as co-creative movement between researcher and research project. 'Researchers are changed, transformed in some way and the field of research is also changed' (Peile 1994, p. 182). Emergent paradigm research processes are best described as participatory rather than as controlling of data and participants. 'A deterministic view of reality which encourages people to attempt to control aspects of their world is self sealing' (Peile 1994, p. 158).

In his seminal text *Blackfoot Physics*, theoretical physicist F. David Peat (1994), explains that in both Indigenous and emergent paradigms, knowledge is defined as integrated *process*. Peat describes Indigenous epistemologies in which knowledge is a process of 'coming-to-knowing' which occurs through holistic relationships with all things in the universe (Peat 1994, p. 174). Likewise, in his further work with Briggs, he compares Chaos Theory to Indigenous science. Chaos Theory also emphasises the development of understanding the processes of constantly changing, unpredictable energies (Briggs & Peat 1999).

Emergent paradigm research processes involve researchers relinquishing the illusion of control (Reinharz 1979, p. 254; Schaef 1992, p. 287). When researchers relinquish attempts to control the research process, they begin to participate in the co-creative movement in which sometimes the researcher shapes the process and other times the data shapes the research process. However, during this stage of

relinquishing control, researchers often experience periods of confusion. Reason (1993, p. 281) explains that this 'descent into chaos' is a necessary part of creative research.

The process-centred methodologies of emergent paradigm research stress creative movement between the researcher and the research problem, encouraging full, passionate participation in a holistic manner. In speaking of her connected research process, Shulamit Reinharz (1979, p. 243) explains, 'If we think of social life not as a set of elusive fixed laws, but as a *process of becoming*, then our participation in events will assist our comprehension'.

In emergent paradigm research, *process* involves co-creative change. Schaef (1992, p 298) describes these co-creative processes as transformative experience: 'If we participate fully, we also change what we are observing. If we participate fully, we change.' Other authors similarly note that the process of interconnected research experiences not only changes the researchers' knowledge and understanding of the research topic, it also changes the researchers themselves in significant ways (LeCompte 1993, pp. 17-18; Moustakas 1990, p. 11; Rheinharz 1979, p. 34).

In emergent paradigm research, the emphasis on process may be seen in conceptualisations of time as process. McClintock (cited in Keller 1983, p. 207) describes appropriate research behaviours as 'dwelling patiently'. Rather than beginning with questions designed to fit research processes into a predetermined timeframe, process-centred research stresses participation and relationship.

In emergent paradigm research, truth is also expressed as process, as the researcher's understanding at a particular time, subject to creative change. No claims are made for universal, absolute truth, although claims are made for interconnections between the researcher's understanding and the wider community.

> In the creative approach, truth is a constant process of creative change.... Ideas generated within the creative approach need to be seen as equivalent to a proposition or a proposal which is put forward as a guide to action and is tested out in action (Peile 1994, pp. 181,161).

The definition of truth given in the creative paradigm closely echoes the definitions of truth given by Indigenist scholars and theoretical physicists. In chaos theory, for example: 'truth is...something lived in the moment and expressive of an individual's connection to the whole' (Briggs & Peat 1999, p. 21).

Integrating Spiritual Aspects of human experience into research

A growing number of Western scholars are beginning to make explicit the spiritual aspects of their research experience (Heron 1999; Peat 1994; Reason 1993). Western scholars of emergent paradigm research use a range of terminology to indicate aspects of research involving a reality beyond physical reality. In referring to research experiences that extend beyond the material, some researchers choose terminology such as 'ensouling the world' (McClintock, cited in Keller 1983) or being 'summoned by mystery' (Moustakas 1990, p. 13).

Other emergent paradigm scholars define spirituality as the awareness of the interconnectedness of all things in a web of meaning (Capra 1982). As such, spirituality also includes ordinary, everyday experiences. John Heron (cited in Reason 1998, p. 26) describes spiritual experience as 'simple openness to everyday participative experience, feeling that subject and object are in an inseparable seamless field of imaging and resonance'. Other scholars describe spiritual experience as occurring when humans are fully awake and alive to everyday experience (Matthew Fox cited in Reason 1998, 1983, pp. 3-4). Peat (1994, p. 7) describes spiritual experiences within emergent paradigm research as relationships between energies:

> In modern physics the essential stuff of the universe cannot be reduced to billiard-ball atoms, but exists as relationships and fluctuations at the boundary of what we call matter and energy. Indigenous science teaches us that all that exists is an expression of relationships, alliances, and balances between what, for lack of better words, we could call energies, powers, or spirits.

Peter Reason (1993, p. 277) defines high quality inquiry as incorporating an 'experience of the sacred whole'. He critiques his previous work in cooperative experiential inquiry, notably Reason and Hawkins (1988) and Reason and Rowan (1981), as not capable of fully exploring human experience because it was based on a human centred epistemology that ignored the interconnectedness of all things in a living universe. Reason explains that inquiry which includes spiritual aspects provides a more balanced representation of human experience, 'I wish to heal the barrenness of the isolated intellect by bringing it into relationship with emotional, practical, aesthetic and spiritual rigour...' (Reason 1993, p. 277). He argues that 'one of the primary purposes of human inquiry is to heal the splits which characterise modern Western consciousness' (Reason 1998, p. 4).

A growing number of emergent paradigm researchers such as Reason (1993) and Suzuki and Knudson (1992) maintain that reintegration of spirituality within formal academic research is a central methodological issue. The explicit inclusion of spiritual aspects of research has been named as one of the six crucial issues facing qualitative researchers: '...concerns of the spirit are already returning to the human disciplines, and will be more important in the future' (Lincoln & Denzin 1998, p. 424).

In his exploration of the creative paradigm, Peile (1994) does not make explicit the interconnections between spiritual experience and intellectual, emotional and bodily experiences. However, he does suggest the integral nature of spirituality within emergent paradigm research when he explains that 'the creative paradigm recognises the link between scientific, metaphysical and spiritual understandings' (Peile 1994, p. 275). In the concluding chapter of his thesis, he points toward the possibility of God being equated with the holomovement and thus enfolded in all things (Peile 1994, p. 279).

Expanded Concepts of Empirical Data

Western scholars of emergent paradigm research often define empirical research data in a holistic sense, as involving more than five senses. As discussed in Chapter Five, Indigenist research methodologies include data obtained from dreams, visions, ancestors, and communication with the natural world. Likewise, Western scholars of emergent paradigm research also utilise expanded definitions of empirical data.

One such scholar is Peile (1994, p. 225), who acknowledges sensory experiences in which information is processed at:

> ... the unconscious level, for example when dreaming or daydreaming, (in which) all sorts of other differences, processes and associations may be intuitively explored.

Peile does not advocate an abandonment of intellectual analysis, rather a more balanced approach which integrates intellect, intuition, dreaming and other levels of knowing. He cautions against using other sensory experience in isolation from intellect, stating that untested information that comes through intuition can be as incomplete as information that is processed solely through intellectual analysis (Peile 1994, pp. 226-227).

Emergent paradigm research which incorporates expanded definitions of acceptable data does not eschew intellectual experience. Rather it incorporates intellectual experience of data with other sources of data in a 'mix of rational, serendipitous and intuitive phenomena' (Reinharz 1979, p. 11). In the following subsections I discuss emergent research processes that involve expanded concepts of empirical data including intuition, dreams, and unconscious, *tacit* knowing.

Intuition as a source of Empirical Data

Emergent research methodologies are beginning to emphasise the role of intuition, knowing that is beyond conscious reasoning (Moustakas 1990; Peile 1994; Reinharz 1979; Schaef 1992). For example, McClintock (cited in Keller 1983, p. 103) describes the central role of intuition in her research:

> Without being able to know what it was I was integrating, I *understood* the phenotype. When you suddenly see the problem, something happens that you have the answer-before you are able to put it into words. It is all done subconsciously. This has happened too many times to me, and I know when to take it seriously.

Dreams as a source of Empirical Data

In emergent paradigm research, data collection and analysis may occur in the dreaming state. In his research into dreaming, Robert L. Van de Castle (1994) describes dreams that led to significant advancements in Western scientific research. For example, the periodic table of elements, revolutions in organic chemistry, medicine, and computer science were all initially conceptualised through dreams (Van de Castle 1995, pp. 33-39). Emergent paradigm scholars stress the importance of exploring the role of dreams, daydreams and meditative states within the research process (Moustakas 1990, p. 11; Peile 1994; Reason 1993).

Communication with the Natural World as a source of Empirical Data

Few emergent paradigm researchers write openly about research experiences that incorporate more than the five senses. However, Reason (1993, pp. 273-274) writes that his experiences which hint at a reality beyond the physical have led him to re-conceptualise the world as alive, full of meaning and purpose. Although he does not elaborate upon his experiences of knowing through more than the five

senses, Reason (1993, p. 274) explains that it was those experiences that led him to re-conceptualise research as involving communication with the natural world.

Bodily Knowing as Empirical Data

Emergent paradigm researchers Peile (1994) and Polanyi (1962) also emphasise the research role of unconscious, bodily knowing that is not directly perceived by the five senses, but embedded in holistic ways in human experience. Michael Polanyi (1962) states that all sensory knowing is based on a foundation of tacit, bodily knowing that is not analysed through individual sensory input, but is experienced in an unconscious, holistic manner. Peat (1994, pp. 55-66) compares Indigenous epistemological processes with Polanyi's (1962) explication of *tacit knowing*:

> In both cases the knowledge is acquired through experience and relationship with the thing to be known. In both cases the knowledge is not so much stored in the brain but is absorbed into the whole person.

Summary

Emergent paradigm research and Indigenist methodologies do not advocate the abandonment of data perceived by the five senses. Rather, they implement expanded concepts of data, balancing what is perceived by the five senses with other data derived through intuition, dreams, and tacit, bodily knowing.

Emergent paradigm research shares many of the central characteristics of Indigenist research such as interconnectedness, emphasis on process, inclusion of spiritual experience, and expanded conceptualisations of empirical data. Although not all emergent paradigm scholars acknowledge the interconnections between their approach and that of Indigenist researchers, their work provides support for the inclusion of Indigenist epistemologies and methodologies within formal academic research.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the interconnections between Indigenist and emergent Western research paradigms, including the similarities between the central characteristics of Indigenist research and emergent paradigm research. I also

discussed some ways in which interparadigmatic dialogue is beginning to take place between Indigenist researchers and Western scholars of emergent paradigm research in theoretical physics, feminist studies and the social sciences.

I have endeavoured to illuminate the connections between Indigenous and Western epistemologies and methodologies in order to provide theoretical support for the methodology which I utilised in my field research. In the next chapter I elaborate on my experience of conducting research that is interconnected, process oriented, integrates spiritual experience, and contains expanded notions of empirical data.

I maintain that Indigenist epistemologies are neither isolated matters nor exotic curiosities; they are political matters with real life consequences. When research continually privileges Western ontologies and epistemologies, Indigenous ways of knowing are silenced. Policies and practices that affect Indigenous lives are then based on biased, ill-informed and often invalid methodologies. I have endeavoured to decrease the hegemony of Western epistemologies and methodologies by implementing interparadigmatic dialogue between Indigenist and emergent paradigm research. In the next chapter I explore this approach which I have termed *Interconnected Knowing*.

CHAPTER SEVEN
INTERCONNECTED KNOWING

In Chapter Six I discussed interparadigmatic dialogue between Indigenist and emergent Western paradigms, maintaining that the central characteristics of Indigenist research are supported by Western emergent paradigm research. In developing my methodology of *Interconnected Knowing* I integrated Indigenist and emergent Western epistemologies. In the first section of this chapter, I provide a brief description and pictorial explanation of my methodology of *interconnected knowing*. Next, I discuss the processes of *Interconnected Knowing*, and then discuss the measures of validity which I applied to my research.

Pictorial Representation of Interconnected Knowing

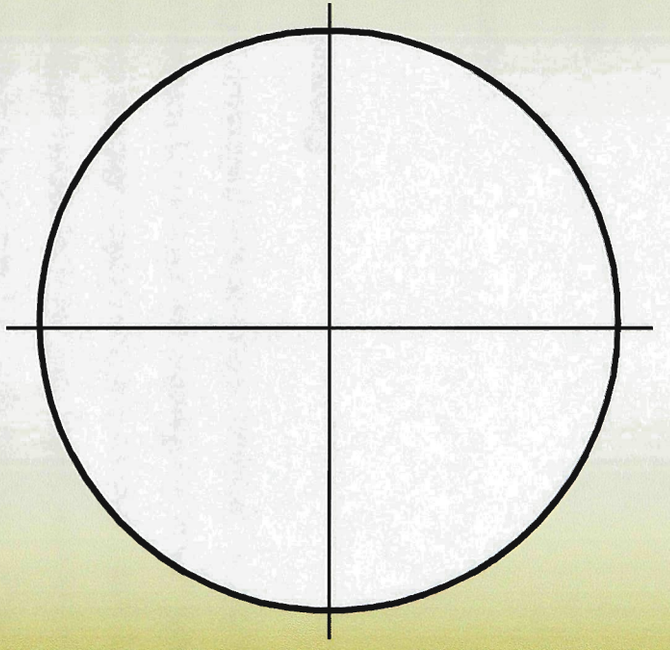
In the diagram on the following page, I provide a pictorial representation of my methodology of *Interconnected Knowing*. The diagram is based on the Native American concept of the Medicine Wheel (Garrett & Garrett 1996, pp. 139-141; Bopp et al. 1989) which depicts the processes and relationships that comprise Native American worldview. In Native American cosmologies, the four directions of the Medicine Wheel represent four stages that are revisited in a continually cycling process. The East represents beginnings, the South represents immersion, the West represents reflective understanding of others and self, the North represents wisdom, synthesis and balance. (Bopp et al. 1989).

At each of the four directions of the diagram of *Interconnected Knowing,* I have listed the characteristics of the epistemologies that informed my methodology. At each directional position the first line represents Cherokee and Native American epistemologies (Garrett & Garrett 1996; Bopp et al. 1989). The second line represents Peter Reason's (1993) *Sacred Inquiry*, the third Moustakas' (1990) *Heuristic Inquiry* and the fourth line represents epistemology suggested by Peile's (1994) Creative Paradigm. Within the text of this chapter, I elaborate upon the interparadigmatic and intermethodological approach depicted within this diagram.

INTERCONNECTED KNOWING

Font Legend:
- • ***CHEROKEE: Native American***
- ❖ Sacred Inquiry
- ➢ *Heuristic Inquiry*
- ◆ **Creative Paradigm**

- • ***MIND: Wisdom, synthesis, balance, completion***
- ❖ Action for healing
- ➢ *Explication, creative synthesis*
- ◆ **Achieving synthesis**



- • ***BODY: Understanding in terms of others/reflection/introspection***
- ❖ Understanding and Framing. Experience in ways that are not alienating
- ➢ *Indwelling, focusing, incubation, illumination*
- ◆ **Holding a difference**

- • ***SPIRIT: Interconnectedness***
- ❖ Experience of the Sacred Whole
- ➢ *Initial engagement*
- ◆ **Holomovement**

- • ***NATURAL WORLD: Understanding, emotions***
- ❖ Representation of experience in ways that bring beauty
- ➢ *Immersion*
- ◆ **Establishing a difference**

Processes of Interconnected Knowing

In this section I explain the processes depicted in the Medicine Wheel diagram of *Interconnected Knowing*. Each of the processes is considered in relation to the four directions of the Medicine Wheel. The processes of *Interconnected Knowing* are set in a framework of weaving the central characteristics of Indigenist research into:

The East

- developing methodology
- selection of participants

The South

- ethical participation
- story as research method

The West

- interconnected data analysis

The North

- synthesis

In the East: Developing Methodology

The research methodology I developed was situated within an interparadigmatic framework of Indigenist and Western *holomovement* paradigms. In Indigenist paradigms, knowledge is acquired through experience, not through linear cause and effect analysis. Likewise, in Western *holomovement* paradigms, such as Peile's (1994) Creative Paradigm, knowledge is acquired through synthesis of individual experience with the experience of others. Therefore, in both paradigms, research questions are designed to develop a holistic understanding of experience.

The question I sought to answer through my research was: 'How do people experience conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians?' I was searching for a holistic understanding of this experience that incorporated a wide range of individual experiences. I hoped that my findings would inform the processing of conflict, both at the professional and grassroots levels. As explained earlier in this thesis, the major Western models of conflict resolution make claims of universality, maintaining that their techniques 'cut across cultures' (Avruch & Black 1990, 1991). I maintain that technical knowledge alone is inadequate in processing conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous

peoples who have experienced the processes of colonisation. In response to these concerns, I designed my research question to increase ethical knowledge in which:

> The person with understanding does not know and judge as one who stands apart and unaffected, but rather, as one united by a specific bond with the other, he thinks with the other and undergoes the situation with him (Gadamer 1975, p. 288).

In the East: Selection of Participants

I chose to interview Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians who had significant successful experience with intercultural conflict transformation. Quite often research on different cultural groups stresses disharmony and conflict, thereby silencing the majority of people who find ways of living in harmony (Stanfield II 1994, p. 7). In contrast, my research includes Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians who have long term experience in transforming conflict in positive ways.

In selecting the participants for my research, I built upon the relationships I had previously established with Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. I had worked with most of the participants on projects involving reconciliation, cross-cultural awareness training, Indigenous consensual conflict processing, or implementing Indigenous epistemologies in formal academic programs. During the course of the interviews, several of the participants recommended that I speak with some of their colleagues and friends who also had successful experience in intercultural conflict transformation. I thus extended the web of relationships, interviewing two additional participants who became known to me through my previously established relationships.

As discussed in Chapter Six, Indigenist and holomovement paradigms emphasise interconnections between people. Participants with whom the researcher has established a trusting relationship are possibly more willing to share deeply regarding their experiences. Martin Prechtel, a Native American speaking of his experiences as a member of a Mayan village, describes the importance of establishing relationships before attempting to learn from/with Indigenous peoples:

> Work that is done within the context of relationship is more open, sharing and trusting...researchers want to learn, write, and then run off without first taking the time it really takes to be trusted...The Tzutujil demand that you "go the route" to learn anything, which means that questions are not answered until they are asked properly, which can

> only be accomplished by someone who has taken the time to get the Mayan vision of life.... (Prechtel 1999, pp. 3-4).

In Indigenist research, relationship increases the validity and trustworthiness of research data. Many marginalised people maintain that it is 'easier to lie to strangers' and that relationship between the researcher and the participants increases validity (Stanfield II 1993, p. 31). To increase the opportunities for collaboration based on trust, I selected participants with whom I had developed relationships.

In total, I interviewed seven Indigenous Australians and seven non-Indigenous Australians. The Indigenous participants included six women and one man. The non-Indigenous participants included four women and three men. In my interviewing process, I wanted to include the experiences of both genders. However, the emphasis of my research was not gender difference in conflict transformation, but cultural difference in regard to intercultural conflict transformation. Therefore, I selected participants primarily based on their cultural background and experience in intercultural conflict transformation, rather than their gender.

In the South: Ethical Participation

Interconnectedness of all aspects of a researcher's experience is a central characteristic of both Indigenist research and Western *holomovement* research. Correspondingly, a characteristic of these research paradigms is involvement of a researcher's total self. In Indigenist and holomovement research, methods of research immersion involve:

- researcher transparency
- passionate involvement in the experience being studied
- commitment to the processes of co-creative change.

Sharing one's story: Researcher transparency

> The logics of inquiry are cultural and political constructs. Thus the study of methodology must begin with questions concerning the life histories of researchers...for decades, much potential sobering knowledge about racial and ethnic issues has been either lost or distorted because researchers have failed to reflect on the implications of their life histories and cultural backgrounds as ideological intrusions in this emotion-laden field of study (Stanfield II 1993, p. 33).

As discussed in Chapter Five, participants need to know the researcher's background, values and motivation in order to make informed decisions about what they choose to share and how they choose to share it (Smith 1999). 'Stories are not just told, they are told to someone' (Reinharz 1979, p.47). Throughout my research process, I endeavoured to clearly depict my cultural background and the ways in which these experiences have influenced my research. Before each interview I shared my personal and professional interest in conflict transformation in order to increase participant's knowledge of who I am and why I am doing this research. In so doing, I hoped to increase the knowledge participants needed to make informed decisions regarding their responses.

Passionate involvement in the research topic

The methodology of *Interconnected knowing* involves significant personal experience of the processes being studied. *Holomovement* research is also described as a participatory paradigm in which researchers can only know deeply when they participate in processes similar to those of the participants (Moustakas 1990; Peile 1994). I was passionately involved and immersed both in the research process and concomitant activities within the community in regard to reconciliation and transformation of conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians.

In the South: Story as Research Method

As discussed in Chapter Five, in Indigenist research the researcher and the participants are part of a whole. A human is 'self-in other,' an inextricable part of the community (Armstrong & Smith 1999). Likewise, in emergent paradigm research, interconnections between the researcher and the participants form one of the central characteristics of research. The interconnections between a researcher's self-reflexive accounts of experience and the participant's experience provide a clearer picture of the more universal aspects of human experience in general. In both Moustakas' Heuristic Inquiry (1990) and Peile's (1994) Creative Paradigm, integration of the researchers' internal and external experience provides the deepest experience of the research question. Therefore I kept a journal of my research experience. I integrated insights developed from a self-reflexive analysis of this data into the thematic synthesis of the findings.

Within my methodology, I incorporated three different types of stories of intercultural conflict transformation: participants' stories of their experience, the stories of other Australians who had published written accounts of their experiences, and stories of my personal experience. The themes that I developed to express what I learned through this research process were developed through a synthesis of these three different types of stories.

Data Collection through Story

> Hear the power that sedimented, forgotten stories hold. Learn from them, and reinvent your life pathway accordingly. For in the telling and careful hearing them begins the journey of a true human being (McLaughlin 1993, p.239).

Indigenist research relies heavily on holistic oral strategies (Begay & Maryboy 1998; Meyer 1998a; Smith 1999). In order to elicit holistic accounts of participants' experience, I chose to invite their stories of transforming conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. In this way, I both supported the oral traditions of Indigenous peoples, and elicited *ethnoconflict* theory and practice, local knowledge regarding conflict and how it might be processed (Avruch & Black 1991).

Stories explore interconnections with participants and illuminate new ways of addressing social injustice (Denzin & Lincoln 1994, p. 584). As I listened to participant's stories, sometimes I felt saddened and shocked. At other times, I laughed along with the teller at stories, which if read from a written text would appear quite sad. Each time I was awed at the depth of the wisdom embedded in the stories of the participant's experiences.

In *interconnected knowing*, data collection through story enfolds the four central characteristics of Indigenist research: interconnectedness, emphasis on process and relationships, inclusion of spirituality, and expanded concepts of data. By incorporating holistic accounts of experience, story facilitates the decolonisation of Western processes which privilege intellectual experience. As such, story has been widely implemented in the decolonising processes of Indigenist research (Smith 1999). Story is also an important tool in Western emergent research (Moustakas; Reason 1993, p. 279). The telling of stories involves a holistic representation of many aspects of human experience: bodily, intellectual, emotional

and spiritual (Duryea & Potts 1993, p. 388; Forester 1996, p.510-513). In the following subsections, I elaborate on the ways in which the central characteristics of Indigenist and holomovement research are supported through the use of story.

Weaving the Web: Interconnectedness in story

In my research, the participants' stories naturally expressed the interconnectedness of many aspects of experience. Participants spoke of how their experiences in conflict transformation were shaped by elders, as well as by ancestors who interacted with them in spirit form. They also described experiences in which conflict was transformed through bodily experiences that were not easily explained. Some of them also described how communication with the natural world shaped conflict transformation. All of them shared deeply about the emotional aspects of the experience of conflict transformation.

Stories illuminate the interconnectedness of all things, including the connections between individuals who are quite different from each other (Duryea & Potts 1993, p. 388). In illuminating the connectedness of all humans, story serves as a kind of conflict transformation in and of itself as individual stories 'rekindle a sense of common humanity' (Duryea & Potts 1993, p. 393).

In research methodology, story weaves a web that incorporates individual experience into collective experience. As individual stories are told and listened to, a larger story comes into existence (Forester 1996, p. 513-517). In my methodology, individual stories were synthesised with other's stories to create themes. In turn, the themes tell the larger story of intercultural conflict transformation. Thus story is a process of weaving individuals' experience into a larger web of meaning, as Deborah Bird Rose explains:

> This web of connection is not just out there, it is within and without. We are in it, and of it, and in connections with this web we encounter the sacredness of our own lives and our own persons...the world is not in need of a new story, it is we who are in need. On a path of dialogue, we would not look inside ourselves to find the story, but rather would reach out to other people and other living things. We would take care. We would take care with patience while waiting to be claimed and brought into an unfolding story that concerns us and contains us. The story is certainly not scripted by us, but it needs us because we're part of it (Rose, cited in The Religion Report 1999).

Implementing story as a research method allowed a natural integration of the worldview of each participant. As discussed earlier in this thesis, in research

involving more than one culture, issues related to differences in worldview become of central importance. Stories naturally 'embody the cultural framework' or worldview of peoples thus counteracting the tendency of many researchers and practitioners to approach cultural difference prescriptively, based on stereotypes (Duryea & Potts 1993, p. 388).

Story as Process

Stories also express the processes of co-creative change. Listening deeply to stories 'coaxes people forward towards better ways of doing things in the future' (Ross 1992, p. 173). In the process of hearing story not only are the listeners changed, they work to change the situations which they understand more clearly after having heard the story. Telling stories is thus a process through which we shape ourselves as human beings:

> When stories are retold, the point is not what can be stated in so many analytical points. The point is rather what a listener *becomes* in the course of listening to the story (Frank 1995, p. 159).

As an Indigenist research method, stories lead people away from reliance on technique, into the deeper aspects of process. Auntie Pearl King (1997), an Australian Aboriginal elder of the Komilarol people, explains the importance of story in addressing the holistic aspects of people's experience:

> And when we do come together, let us not argue about principles and opinions. Let us share heartfelt stories about our everyday lives about histories shared or not, about how we all feel afraid because our lives do not feel as our own. Let us have the sensitivity and courage to see how our relationships have been affected by our history.

Incorporating spiritual aspects in story

Participants' stories naturally integrate the spiritual aspects of their experience into the research data. Enfolded in stories are human passions and experiences that often become the 'academic undiscussables' (Forester 1996, p. 520). In inviting participant's stories, I did not ask specific questions related to spiritual experience. Nevertheless, all of the Indigenous participants spoke openly of experiences with spirits and ancestors through dreams and visions. One of the Indigenous participants shared the following example of the ways in which ancestors assist in Indigenous processes of transforming conflict:

> *...when I am doing talks...how I psyche myself up is that I call on my mother...And I can feel her on my shoulder. On this side. And she walks out with me or she is just there at the stage..._____ calls on the elders...I've seen him do some fantastic talks and speeches. And I say, "How did you do that?" and he says, "Well, you know, I called on them old people. They see me through. (Participant Interview 5).*

Within the stories that the participants shared with me are many accounts of assistance from and communication with ancestors who assist in the processes of conflict transformation. In the following excerpt from one of the Aboriginal participant's stories, the participant describes the ways in which her ancestor spirits assist in transforming conflict:

> *If anything goes bad I just talk to them. I believe in the spirits. I believe in the spirits getting us to reconcile.... Menmuny is my great-grandfather. His mother had this dream. He told us about it all through the years. She dreamt of the cultural changes that were going to happen. She asked Menmuny not to accept the missionaries. But he had no choice. He's always regretted not listening to her dreams because of the terrible cultural changes that happened on the mission. They were terrible for his people. We believe in dreams. (Participant Interview 2).*

Expanded concepts of data in story

The experiences recounted in participant's stories included dreams, tacit experiences and communication with the natural world. Although these aspects of experience are not regularly included in interview questions, they were naturally integrated into participants' stories of intercultural conflict transformation.

Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants shared stories of dreams that had shaped their experience of intercultural conflict transformation, as illustrated within this non-Indigenous participants' story:

> *I was having fever and I can remember very clearly: I imagined myself in the tip of the Cape like the tip of a mountain and it was very precarious. You're a minority. It reinforces to me to know who I am, I am a White Middle Class Australian of goodwill. My job is to work with my mob. I'll build relationships that are appropriate to achieve the goal, but I'm not going to pretend that I'm something that I'm not (Participant #7).*

Other participants spoke of tacit experiences that integrated bodily ways of knowing into the process of conflict transformation. One of the Aboriginal participants shared the following story of the tacit processes of co-creative change:

> *It was as though I stepped inside his space, either physically, and I can't remember whether it was an actual physical step inside his space, or it was some other process, but I know that it was like a flash of light and the next thing, we were interacting in a much different way. And I know that without recalling the detail now, that that relationship and the work I was able to do with him as a client at the time was much more effective and honest, trusting. It set down the basis of having stepped inside. From that point on, I was able to become more understanding of those who drank and my fear of those who drank essentially disappeared (Participant Interview 1).*

In the West: Interconnected Data Analysis

In processing my data, I used methods designed to acknowledge interconnectedness. Many of the analytical techniques of Western qualitative research are atomistic and linear, designed to fragment information and consider it in isolation in order to discover causal relationships (Churchill 1996, pp. 278-281). In contrast, Indigenist epistemologies stress the interconnectedness of all things in our experience. To understand fully, one must understand how all things are interconnected in a web of meaning (Bopp et al. 1989, p. 26). Individual aspects of data may be analysed, but only in relation to where they fit within the whole (Smith 1999).

I devised and implemented analytical processes designed to increase understanding of the interconnections within participants' experience. In the literature on Western emergent qualitative research, I found hints of analyses that emphasised interconnections. In data management that stresses interconnections, expression of results are defined as '...a network of nonhierarchical relationships, expressed through statements defining linkages among concepts' (Carley, cited in Huberman & Miles 1994, p. 434). Likewise in both Indigenist and holomovement paradigms, analysis involves 'close inspection of parts but always in relation to the whole' (Peile 1994, p. 16). In my methodology, interconnected data analysis involves:

- deep listening
- webmaking
- creating portraits that reflect beauty.

In the following subsections I discuss these processes in more detail.

Interconnected Data Analysis: Deep Listening

One of the major characteristics of my analysis was *deep listening*. The use of story as a formal research tool encourages deep listening on the part of the researcher. Stories by nature are wandering accounts of experience, 'messy' with complexities and chaotic interruptions (Forester 1994, pp. 521-522). Therefore, stories require careful, deep, patient listening in order to interpret what really matters. Deep listening is also a central characteristic of Indigenist epistemologies (Rael 1993, pp. 34, 65-75). In the Australian Aboriginal *Ngangikurungkurr* language, deep listening is called ***dadirri***, and involves awareness, patient stillness, doing things with care, waiting for the right time at which 'the way will be made clear' (Miriam Rose Ungunmerr-Bauman 1993, pp. 34-37).

I employed a process of listening fully and deeply to each interview. First, I listened intently throughout each interview session, attempting to develop a relationship with each participant's story. Then I listened to each taped interview several times, just listening intently, not taking notes nor seeking to begin analysing.

Then I transcribed each tape. It was in this process of attempting to move from the recorded spoken word to the recorded written word that a great deal of deep listening took place. Participants expressed silences, sighs, changes of tone, emotion, and other aspects of the interview that assisted me in deciding what was important within the interview. The process of deep listening was a tacit experience, not a set of explicit techniques. Through an integration of bodily, emotional, spiritual and intellectual knowing I discovered which parts of the interviews seemed to be central to the meaning of the participant's experience.

In *interconnected knowing,* I found deep listening to be a central aspect of my response to ethical research behaviour. Listening deeply to stories is crucial to ethical action, '...if we get the story wrong, the many techniques we know may not help us much at all' (Forester 1996, p. 521). Deep listening also assists the researcher in understanding power relations that affect human experience, and in developing ethical responses within those relations (Forester 1996, p. 521-522).

Interconnected Data Analysis: Webmaking

From each interview I developed a map of interconnections that depicted the central aspects of each interview. I called this process of data analysis *webmaking*. An example of one of these webs is included in Appendix I.

Certain aspects of the web making process were problematic. From a standpoint as an Indigenist researcher, I could sense the importance of interconnecting all aspects of the interview. However, I also realised that after I constructed the maps of interconnections, I would need to transfer the understanding gained from webmaking into the linear processes of written academic English as required in a doctoral thesis. At times I felt extremely frustrated over moving from interconnections to linear explanations. Nevertheless, I found webmaking to be very effective in writing up the findings in ways that honoured the interconnections within the interview stories.

Interconnected Data Analysis: Portraits as Presentational Knowledge

From the web of interconnections I had developed from the interview, I developed a written 'portrait' of each interview session. Each portrait included the central meanings of participants' experience in relation to transforming conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Participants' stories were presented as prose and as poetry that spoke to the experience of transforming conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. Examples of Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants' portraits are found in Appendix II.

The portraits are examples of presentational knowledge which bridges experience and conceptual knowledge (Heron 1992). Both Indigenist and emergent paradigm researchers support presentational knowledge development such as the story, poetry and imagery included in the portraits. Indigenist epistemologies are often expressed through poetry, story, dance and ritual (Smith 1999). Likewise, in Western emergent paradigm research, John Heron (1992, pp. 157-175) articulates the role of story and poetry in linking experiential knowing with conceptual knowing.

I endeavoured to draw up the portraits in ways that retained the beauty of participants' stories. Beauty is a central epistemological concept both in Native

American epistemologies such as Navajo (Begay & Maryboy 1998; Yazzie 1995) and emergent Western epistemologies such as Reason's (1993) Sacred Inquiry.

After I developed each portrait, I mailed it back to the participant, asking if I had accurately portrayed the important aspects of their experience. I was interested not only in what I might have missed in the recorded interview, but in what the participants might wish to add after they had more time to reflect upon their experience. All fourteen participants responded to my comments regarding the initial interviews. All agreed that the portraits expressed what they had said were the central aspects of their experience. Some of the participants asked that certain parts of their portraits be re-worded. Although they indicated that what I had written was indeed what they said during the interview, they explained that once written, the words did not express what they had intended to express. To clarify the meaning of their experience, I made the requested changes in wording. These changes for clarity of meaning were the only changes that were requested by the participants. I believe that the fact that all of the participants indicated that the portrait was an accurate representation of the important aspects of their experience indicates the effectiveness of the analytical processes of deep listening and webmaking.

In the North: Synthesis

The second stage of my analysis was the development of themes from the central characteristics of participants' experience with stories of other Australians and my own personal stories. On the final page of this chapter, these themes are depicted within the metaphor of a web, illustrating the connectedness between each of the themes and thematic components. The six themes are not intended to formulate theory nor a set of techniques for intercultural conflict transformation. Rather, they are intended to develop a deeper understanding of the experience of intercultural conflict transformation in ways that might inform current theory and practice.

In order to develop the themes that characterised the experience of intercultural conflict transformation, I developed a synthesis of the experiences of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Developing the themes was not a simple matter of looking for commonalities. Due to power relations and other variables within the processes of colonisation, Aboriginal Australians and non-Indigenous Australians experience conflict transformation in significantly different ways. A

synthesis recognises both the differences and the interconnections that underlie them.

During my data analysis, I sought to discover a synthesis that revealed the underlying unity of participants' experiences. For example, Indigenous participants often experienced frustration, hurt and anger over the insensitive and racist actions of some non-Indigenous Australians. The non-Indigenous participants also experienced anger and frustration, but in a quite different sense. They most often expressed the frustration of dealing with Indigenous Australians' hostility toward non-Indigenous Australians 'of good will'. Therefore, the source, frequency and intensity of the emotional experience were quite different for Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants. As I explore more fully in Chapter Nine, these experiences were synthesised in a common theme of expressing and utilising emotions in ways that enhance the transformation of conflict.

Synthesis is also a process of *holomovement* paradigms such as Peile's (1994, p. 214) Creative Paradigm. In the Creative Paradigm, synthesis requires a holistic process of establishing a difference and 'holding' the difference until the researcher is able to uncover the implicit unity which underlies the difference (Peile 1994, p. 215). Synthesis cannot be forced through the application of specialised techniques; it must be experienced in a participatory manner (Peile 1994, pp. 215-219).

> (Synthesis) enables the researcher to identify qualities of an experience that have remained out of conscious reach primarily because the individual has not paused long enough to examine his or her experience of the phenomenon. Through the focusing process, the researcher is able to determine the core themes that constitute an experience, identify and assess connecting feelings and thoughts...(Moustakas 1990, p. 25).

Summary

In this section, I have discussed my methodology of *Interconnected Knowing* in relation to Indigenist and emergent paradigm research. I maintain that my methodology serves as a site of dialogue between Indigenous and emergent Western epistemologies. In the following section, I discuss issues of validity in relation to my research.

Issues of Validity in Indigenist and Emergent Western Research

I designed my research to illuminate effective ways of decreasing the structural violence inherent in the Westernisation of Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies. In Western social science methodologies, my research might be considered 'openly ideological' (Lather 1986). Scholars of emergent Western research maintain that openly ideological research such as mine requires specialised measures of validity to insure the research is both relevant and rigorous (Lather 1986, p. 64). Likewise, Indigenist researchers maintain that special measures of validity are needed to adequately evaluate Indigenist research (Begay & Maryboy 1998; Meyer 1998a, 1998b). Indigenist researchers recommend that measures of validity such as the following should be applied to Indigenist research:

- research's ability to maintain and strengthen interrelations (Begay & Maryboy 1998, pp. 133-134)
- strengthening commitment to things of value (Meyer 1998b)
- attestation of integrity from Indigenous community (Begay & Maryboy 1998, pp. 133-134)
- extending culture (Meyer 1998b)

Measures of validity recommended for emergent Western research, particularly openly ideological research are:

- triangulation
- reflexive subjectivity
- face validity
- catalytic validity

In the following subsections, I discuss the ways in which I applied these Indigenist and emergent Western methods of evaluating research.

Research Project's Ability to Maintain and Strengthen Interrelations: Triangulation

Triangulation is the use of multiple data sources, theories and methods to increase the validity of the research (Huberman & Miles 1994, pp. 438-439; Lather 1986; Lincoln & Guba 1986, p. 77). I used multiple data sources, methods and theories throughout my research. By drawing from both Indigenist and emergent Western research I recognised and strengthened the interconnections between them.

My data sources included the stories of the participant's experiences, written texts of individual's experiences and my experience of conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Multiple ways of knowing also informed my research. Native American, Native Hawaiian, and Aboriginal Australian epistemologies informed my methodology of *Interconnected Knowing*. I also incorporated epistemology drawn from Western holomovement paradigms.

I also used multiple methods. *Interconnected knowing* draws on Indigenist research methods, Moustakas'(1990) *heuristic methodology*, Reason's (1993) *sacred inquiry,* and to a lesser extent Reinharz'(1979) *connected knowing*. In my design and implementation of *Interconnected Knowing*, I recognised and strengthened interconnections between and Indigenist and Western epistemologies and methods

Reflexive Subjectivity

Reflexive subjectivity is the documentation of how the logic of the data have transformed the researcher's assumptions (Lather 1986). In Chapter Fourteen, I elaborate more fully upon the changes that the processes of this research have made in my conceptualisation of the processes of intercultural conflict transformation. For example, this research significantly increased my understanding of the impact of power relations and the processes of colonisation upon conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Another significant transformation of my previous assumptions relates to the participants' worldview. I found that the participants had a great deal of understanding of both Aboriginal and Western worldviews. Perhaps the processes of intercultural conflict transformation enable the participants to make their worldview explicit, to be more accepting of the worldview of people from another culture, and to incorporate aspects of different worldviews in which they see value for their own life.

Research Project's Ability to Maintain and Strengthen Interrelations: Face validity

Face validity is defined as shaping findings through participants' feedback (Lather 1986; Lincoln & Guba 1986, p. 77). By integrating participants' feedback I supported the conceptualisations of interconnections, of self-in-community that

characterise Indigenist research. I responded to the issues of participant feedback in several ways. As discussed earlier in this chapter, I edited participants' portraits in response to their feedback. Furthermore, I shaped the elaboration of the themes in response to participant feedback regarding the six themes that represent a synthesis of participants' experience. Ten of the fourteen participants responded to my request for feedback on the suggested themes. All of the respondents agreed that the themes depicted in the findings described the important aspects of their experience of intercultural conflict transformation.

The final aspect of developing face validity concerns my ongoing response to informal feedback from participants as I share experiences of intercultural conflict transformation with them. For the purposes of this research as a PhD thesis, formal data collection and analysis have ceased. However, as an Indigenist researcher, my participation will continue as the participants and I work together, share stories and continue to shape our understanding and insight into the processes of transforming conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians.

Strengthening Commitment to Things of Value: Catalytic validity

Catalytic validity has been defined as the 'degree to which the research process re-orients, focuses, and energizes participants' (Lather 1986; Lincoln & Guba 1986, p. 82). Indigenist researchers describe a similar type of validity measure of strengthening commitment to things of value (Meyer 1998b). As discussed in earlier chapters, the co-creative research processes of Indigenist and holomovement paradigm research change the area of research and also change the researcher and the participants. In the following subsections, I discuss the validity of my research in regard to transformation of the researcher, transformation of the research problem and transformation of participants.

Transformation of the Researcher

As explained earlier in this chapter, both Indigenist and emergent paradigm methodologies conceptualise the researcher as being changed by the research process (Moustakas 1990, p. 13). I was deeply changed through the process of this research. I developed a deeper understanding of the processes of colonisation that silence Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies. In the early stages of my research, I realised that my research necessarily involved a response to colonisation.

I could either collude with the colonising system that silenced Indigenous epistemologies or I could support the integration of Indigenous epistemologies within formal academic research. I chose to do the latter.

Conducting this research also strengthened my identity as an Indigenous person. I came to recognise that many Indigenous identities had been constructed by the dominant culture and did not reflect the ways in which Indigenous peoples identified themselves. I chose to resist the essentialising processes that had been instituted to silence Indigenous peoples, particularly those of mixed ancestry.

I also came to understand more deeply the transforming processes of story. The stories that the participants shared with me changed me in many ways. I came to understand that the knowledge gained through the participants' stories was a gift; it was not a demonstration of my expertise. This perspective has increased my awareness of the reciprocity and responsibilities that I have in relation to receiving these gifts. I perceive my responsibilities as extending far beyond the formal period of this research:

> ...when knowledge is construed as a gift, the process of knowing, and the relations with others and the natural world that are constitutive of that process, become central... The process of knowing must be undertaken in a way that respects and reflects the fact that each individual, each community, each tribe, nation and species has ...a responsibility to the generations to come and to those who have passed (Whitt 1997, p. 11).

Transformation of the research problem

I found it challenging to employ measures of the transformation of the experience of conflict transformation. I believe that a meaningful measurement would require years of follow up study. Such a longitudinal study would be required to determine if the information generated through this work impacted in any meaningful way upon the experience of intercultural conflict transformation in Australia. Nevertheless, I have had several experiences that would indicate to me that the information illuminated through my study has the potential to facilitate sustainable conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians.

As I mentioned previously, one of the participants in the research requested a copy of the summary of the findings to share with a colleague. Since that time, the colleague, who is affiliated with another university, has requested that the themes

illuminated through my research project be included in a training manual for a leadership in reconciliation program, which is to be disseminated throughout Australia.

In addition, I continue to do lecturing and small group teaching in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit at the University of Queensland. The Unit's staff and I engaged in several dialogues relating to decolonising research and our role in those processes. I also gave lectures on decolonising research in some of the Unit's classes. Subsequently, the director has explained to me that this information has shaped the ways in which he conceptualises the Unit's courses. Rather than presenting the courses primarily as Indigenous historical and political perspectives, the director plans to more clearly articulate the processes of decolonising research within the curriculum.

In some ways, the methodology of *interconnected knowing* is a type of conflict transformation in and of itself. Duryea & Potts (1993) define conflict transformation as 'reconstructing the stories in an inclusive sense so both stories are accommodated and both experience legitimacy.' Through developing a synthesis of stories, I have come to understand a larger story that enfolds the stories of the individuals experiencing conflict transformation.

Transformation of participants

Transformation of research participants is one of the central measurements of catalytic validity. Again, I found it challenging to process data in ways that supported the Indigenous epistemologies I employed. Western emergent paradigm research calls for systematic methods of determining the catalytic processes of participants (Lather 1986). However, I did not systematically request information on how the research process affected each participant. My understanding of many Indigenous epistemologies is that such a request could be considered arrogant and intrusive. However, I did record unsolicited comments from participants who commented on the changes they experienced as a result of the research project. I believe these unsolicited comments are a more trustworthy measure of the ways in which my research strengthened participants' commitment to things of value.

One of the non-Indigenous participants shared the ways in which the research processes assisted him in developing a holistic understanding of intercultural conflict transformation:

> *I would really appreciate it (processes of participant feedback)...the reason I'm getting involved in this...is I need to be around people working these things through emotionally for myself, so sounds like your work would be quite helpful...I feel a bit inadequate because I haven't done the reflecting to make a lot of my experiences explicit...I haven't found anyone to talk to...obviously your friends don't ask, because they don't even know what to ask, because they're not in it, so this is helpful to me, really helpful, I appreciate that (Participant feedback 12).*

One of the Indigenous participants described the ways in which the research process had increased her commitment to intercultural conflict transformation.

> *As an Indigenous Australian, I personally feel "conflict transformation" is happening and in many forms as your writings depict. For a time it was difficult for me to describe and to put it into words but you have captured my feelings in your themes*
>
> *Even though we have been forced to accept the non-Indigenous way as Indigenous Australians we never lose our capacity to learn, love and grow. The process to me is one of healing and I can only wish that our children and grandchildren (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) can feel and understand the hurt and what we have endured to give them a life that they can now be comfortable with.*
>
> *I thank you ... from the bottom of my heart and soul for allowing me to express my experiences and thoughts in this process of conflict transformation. I now know that even at my age I can still make an impact (Participant 2, feedback).*

I endeavoured to conduct research that was both relevant and rigorous. I believe that these selections from participants' unsolicited comments speak for the rigor of this research.

Attestation of integrity from Indigenous community

Indigenist scholars recommend attestation of integrity from Indigenous communities as a measure of the validity of Indigenist research (Begay & Maryboy 1998, pp. 133-134). My research has not yet been published; therefore I do not yet have a response from the Indigenous communities in regard to my written thesis. However, I do have some indication that the Indigenous communities within Queensland acknowledge the integrity of my research. I have been asked to accept more teaching responsibilities within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit at the University of Queensland. Also I am frequently asked to facilitate workshops involving Indigenous Australians. Furthermore, elders and council representatives of the Native American community in Queensland have given me full support on my research.

Extending Culture

Meyer (1998b) also advocates the research's ability to extend culture as a measure of validity in Indigenist research. As explained in the previous chapters, one of the main goals of this research has been to create space within Western research institutions for the inclusion of Indigenous worldviews. This research extends culture through the implementation of Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies within formal academic research

In this section I have discussed the Indigenist and Western emergent research measures of validity that I have used to evaluate my research. I maintain that measures from both paradigms attest to the validity of my methodological approach.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated the ways in which my methodology of *interconnected knowing* integrates the central characteristics of Indigenist and Western emergent paradigm research. In this research project, I implemented methodology which integrates the processes of story, deep listening, webmaking, presentational knowing and illumination of themes. These processes integrate the four central characteristics of Indigenist and emergent paradigm research: interconnectedness, inclusion of spiritual aspects of experience, expanded concepts of data, and co-creative processes.

In the following six findings chapters, I present selections from participants' interviews both in the form of prose and poetry. Although poems are not often used in formal presentation of research findings, poetry effectively links participants' experience with the conceptual thinking required in a thesis format (Heron 1992). Poetry is also my response to the ontological necessity of beauty in the formal processes of knowing (Reason 1993, p. 279). I made decisions to present participants' experience as a poem when the words seemed to carry a meaning that extended beyond the immediate context. Cherokee scholar Marilou Awiakta (1993, p. 21) describes the process of acknowledging and celebrating oral poetry as identifying expression in which 'the energy is concentrated and evokes a reality beyond the surface'.

In the findings chapters, I discuss the six central themes that were drawn from participants' stories of their experience of intercultural conflict transformation. I

also discuss the implications of each theme in relation to the discipline of conflict resolution. The final findings chapter explores my experiences of conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. On the following page, the six themes are portrayed in a pictorial representation designed to illustrate the web of interconnections that underlie the themes.

Deep Understanding
Seeing Through other Eyes
Knowledge of History
Respecting other realities
Education
Cultural Practice
Human Rights
Balancing Inequalities
Healing
Identity
Self Awareness
Self-Transformation
Conflict Transformation
Honouring Commonalities
Honouring Differences
Respectful Approach
Developing Relationships
Institutional Change
Personal Change
Working as Equals
Positive Social Action
Harnessing power of emotions
Emotional Impact
Understanding Emotions

CHAPTER EIGHT

DEEP UNDERSTANDING

As will be discussed in the following six findings chapter, participants experience conflict transformation as a process of interconnected aspects involving deepening understanding, self transformation, understanding emotions, developing relationships, balancing inequalities, and working together to implement positive social change. In this chapter I discuss the theme that addresses the development of holistic, deep levels of understanding:

> **Conflict transformation involves development of deep understanding from a holistic experience of:**
>
> - **seeing through the eyes of another**
> - **knowledge of the impact of historical events on current conflict**
> - **acknowledging and respecting other realities.**

In the first section of this chapter, I discuss participants' experience of understanding the point of view of others involved in the conflict. In the second section, I discuss participants' experience of the importance of understanding the impact of colonial history on conflict transformation. In the third section, I discuss Aboriginal and non-Indigenous participants' experiences of acknowledging and respecting each other's worldview. In the final section, I discuss the ways in which the participants' experiences of developing deep understanding inform the discipline of conflict studies.

In their stories, many of the participants describe their experiences as reconciliation rather than conflict transformation. Wessells and Bretherton (2000, p. 103) explain that in Australia, 'attempts to address the conflict between Indigenous people and the descendants of white settlers is referred to as reconciliation'. Many reconciliation projects involve the same parameters as conflict transformation:

> In the Australian context, reconciliation entails uncovering and coming to terms with the past, sharing power and correcting injustices, reconstructing collective self-esteem and moving beyond internalised images of inferiority, restoring respect for cultures that the colonial powers had sought to eradicate, and building channels for cooperation and positive development (Wessells & Bretherton 2000, p. 101).

Thus participants who describe their experiences as reconciliation are describing processes that transform conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians.

Deep Understanding: Seeing Through the Eyes of Another

In this section, I discuss participants' experience in seeing the other's point of view through acknowledging differences, acknowledging commonalities, and sharing stories. In this chapter and the remaining findings chapters, some of the participants' experiences are presented in poem format. I have chosen to do so in order to retain both the beauty and the universal meaning of their experience, as described by emergent paradigm scholar Reason (1993) and Indigenist scholars Awiakta (1993) and Smith (1999).

In the experience of conflict transformation, participants find it important to understand both their own position and the point of view of the others involved in the conflict. Participants in conflict transformation thus seek to 'see through the others' eyes', even if they only manage to do so for a little while, or in a limited manner. In the following interview selection, one of the non-Indigenous participants describes her process of striving to see from an Aboriginal perspective, realising she will never be able to fully understand their experience.

If we could put ourselves
In an Aboriginal person's skin,
We might be able to understand
The disappointments, prejudices and injustices
That are the norm for an Aborigine.
We could never fully understand
The special relationship
They have to the land,
Their Sacred Sites,
Or their Dreamtime stories.
(Participant Interview 10.1)

Seeing through the eyes of another involves a special stance of understanding as deeply as possible the reality and complexity of the other's point of view. In conflict transformation, the understanding engendered through seeing the other's reality is more than isolated intellectual knowledge. Deep understanding carries a responsibility to participate in corrective actions designed to ameliorate the conflict

in a long lasting, meaningful manner, as explained by Australian historian Henry Reynolds:

> We can know a great deal about the history of Indigenous-settler relations. But knowing brings burdens which can be shirked by those living in ignorance. With knowledge the question is no longer what we know but what we are now to do, and that is a much harder matter to deal with. It will perplex us for many years to come (Reynolds 1999, p. 257).

Holistic understanding involves active participation as well as intellectual analysis. In conflict transformation, participation is necessary to develop deeper levels of understanding. Correspondingly, deep levels of understanding result in more meaningful participation, as explained by the following non-Indigenous participant:

> *There is wisdom in all cultures, however it is often difficult to recognise and understand, especially when not part of 'mainstream' culture. The deeper elements of culture can seldom be transferred from one group to another without distortion. They must generally be lived, experienced and felt, rather than documented and analysed, before they can be truly imbued. However we can strive to learn and seek that which connects us (Participant interview 6.1).*

Seeing through Another's Eyes: Acknowledging Difference

Participants in conflict transformation stress that it is important to recognise both the commonalties that link human beings, and the differences in the ways they experience conflict and conflict transformation. Their experience contrasts starkly with that of Western conflict resolution scholars such as Fisher and Ury (1997) and Burton (1996) who maintain that cultural differences may be transcended through skilful techniques. Participants maintain that in addition to working to develop common understanding and agreement, they must acknowledge and respect difference. Indeed, participants argue that it is the silencing of difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples that is responsible for a great deal of protracted conflict in colonised societies.

Indigenous participants in conflict transformation express the deep pain they feel when they are told that their experience is no different from those in the dominant group. One of the Aboriginal participants shared an experience in which she was asked to speak to a non-Aboriginal women's group. She was continually frustrated by a non-Aboriginal woman who kept insisting that non-Indigenous and Aboriginal women had the same experiences.

> *And I said, 'Excuse me, excuse me. We have come here tonight to tell you the differences,' (what I should have said was why don't you listen, you know?) 'between Aboriginal women and, and other women.' And I said, '...This is what we are telling you. That is the topic of the talk tonight. Believe me, it is not the same. It is not the same no matter how you try to dress it up, it is not the same as you. Because we were talking about Aboriginal English, and I said, 'Look, when I go home, I do a different... kind of formal speech.' She said, 'Oh, well it is the same for us. We talk to our children in a different way and so forth, you know, and we don't talk like we do in a university lecture.'*
>
> *She got the whole thing wrong and I think that was the... straw that broke this camel's back. Anyway, then I said, 'It's not the same.' And I said, 'I am getting a bit tired of people here telling me that our situation is the same as non-Aboriginal women.' I said, 'It may be similar, yes, and I will give you that, but it is not the same (Participant Interview 5, p. 19).*

Intragroup difference

Although participants in conflict transformation stress the importance of understanding difference, the process is more complex than understanding two distinct cultures. The divisions are not simply binary: multitudes of differences exist within each group. Intragroup differences involve socio-economic status, social relationships, education, religion, political affiliation, generational differences and experiences of colonisation. One of the Aboriginal participants describes intracultural difference in the following manner:

> *...we are as diverse as this landscape is. Our experiences of colonialisation and of tribalism, for all of us have varying degrees, so how do I respect and honour that for another Indigenous person of this country... (Participant interview 14.9).*

Many experiences shape culture. Thus, while generalisations assist Aboriginal and non-Indigenous participants in understanding the differences between the cultural groups, they can never reflect the experiences of all individuals in each group.

Seeing through Another's Eyes: Acknowledging Commonalities

In addition to acknowledging difference, participants maintain that it is also important to recognise commonalities. Participants describe their efforts to implement processes that recognise the shared humanity of all individuals. In the following quote, a non-Indigenous participant describes his experience of recognising commonalities between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians values and spirituality:

> *A search for identity and resolution of cultural conflict requires a real dialogue – one which includes a search for our shared values and spiritual roots, a genuine openness, the will to understand each other, and the ability to step beyond the confines of our own habits and prejudice (Participant interview 6.4).*

In the following interview selection, one of the Aboriginal participants describes her experience of acknowledging the common humanity of all Australians, regardless of their response to colonisation:

> *Everyone has some good.*
> *Sometimes you've got to dig*
> *For it, really, to find it*
> *But you can find it usually.*
> *Focus on that.*
> *Try and develop that.*
> *Develop that so that comes out*
> *And overwhelms all the flaws*
> *They have in their characters.*
> *No one is all bad.*
> *Find their strengths,*
> *Know their faults, their flaws*
> *(Participant interview 4.16).*

Seeing through another's eyes: developing understanding through story

In conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, story is one of the major ways in which deep understanding is developed. Stories present a holistic view of ideas, beliefs, and lived experience, putting flesh on the bones, singing up the emotional and spiritual impact of historical facts.

Participants explain that the processes of conflict transformation create space for stories that previously were silenced by the dominant culture. In listening to these stories, participants develop deeper levels of understanding which include comprehension of historical implications of the current conflict, spiritual aspects and effective actions needed to transform the conflict. Stories often engender deep understanding that allows people to move forward with integrity, as described in the following quotation from a non-Indigenous scholar working to transform conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians:

> People who can tell the stories of the community (unravel the false myths that have dominated people's consciousness) must start to speak and sing. The storytellers are the memory makers. They can introduce us to our histories as communities; they can link us with the past and lead us into a depth that touches our deepest imagination and passions. Here lies the energy for transformation... As people from diverse backgrounds hear such a story we become connected. We all

> stand on sacred ground and feel a part of something deeper than ourselves. Story takes us out of ourselves, out of the moment; it gives us a sense of perspective and mystery; we are part of an emerging story and tradition (Westoby 1997, pp. 10-11).

In Aboriginal worldview, story incorporates the intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual aspects of experience. Embedded within Aboriginal story is a challenge for the listener to respond with integrity to what they have heard. In the following interview selection, one of the Aboriginal participants describes her experience of developing deep understanding through story:

> *However, not only the facts of history are important. Also, the personal stories from which those facts were drawn, the stories that tell of the pain of those whose lives were disrupted through colonisation. I find it more effective to tell my personal story, not just to give facts. When I show the video about the Stolen Generation, which includes people's real life stories and their feelings about them, there is seldom a dry eye in the house. The stories are powerful and strong and when people hear them, they usually change their attitudes (Participant Interview 2.1).*

Aboriginal participants in this research described their frequent experience of non-Indigenous Australians being dismissive of the role of story in Indigenous ways of managing knowledge. Several of the Aboriginal participants shared the difficulties they experience in their professional life when they approach the transformation of conflict by sharing a story. They explain that they are usually accused of 'yarning' instead of responding directly to the conflict.

The response of many non-Indigenous Australians to Aboriginal use of story can be seen in the experience of Duncan Frewin, one of my non-Indigenous colleagues. He describes his frustration with Aboriginal use of story as a response within conflict transformation. He could not understand why Aboriginal Australians kept telling stories instead of articulating a framework for social change. He also describes his coming to understand the role of Indigenous story in the transformation of conflict. In the following excerpt drawn from an email message he sent to me, he describes his experience of coming to understand the role of Aboriginal story in conflict transformation:

> I was at the rally for the stolen generation last Saturday and heard a young man speak. Again, I could see no structure to what he was saying, and I was losing patience. Then I pulled myself up, telling myself to listen to the story. I started to hear where he was coming from and just what his commitment was to the positions/suggestions that he was making.

> Then a white woman spoke, lots of formal rhetoric and easy for me to follow, until I realised that I had no sense of what had brought her to these positions, or even of whether she had much commitment to them, and I longed for her to shut up so I could hear... the young man again.
>
> At the end another Aboriginal man spoke and I marvelled at his ability to combine the two forms – to speak with a logic that I could identify with, and at the same to tie his position to a story that explained how he came to the position and how committed he really was.

Conflict transformation provides a forum for Aboriginal stories which continue to be silenced in the broader community. The dominant voices in the media are most often those of non-Indigenous Australians, with Indigenous Australians' stories frequently seen as folk knowledge, not as powerful social arguments (Brady 1994). Furthermore, stories of non-Indigenous Australians who support the processes of decolonisation are often silenced by labels of do-gooders, bleeding hearts, or troublemakers (Reynolds 1998).

In addition to listening directly to the teller of the story, deep understanding can be developed through exposure to biographies, documentaries, and current historical accounts, as shown in the following story from an Aboriginal participant:

> *I was very involved with World Vision. And Neville Bonner was their patron. His biography came out and I got it and read it and suddenly I thought, 'With all my years, how ignorant I was.' I was totally unaware they were not allowed to go to school in White schools. When I discovered Neville could not go to school with White children, that was the first I even knew and I realised that there is an awful lot that I don't know. And so after that, I bought other Aboriginal people's biographies and autobiographies and read books by Henry Reynolds. And I educated myself a bit in that way to have a better understanding of what happened. I was horrified and became more horrified as I went along with what I've learnt and I am still being horrified by so many things (Participant interview 10.8).*

Seeing through another's eyes involves both Aboriginal and non-Indigneous Australians developing a deeper understanding of the other's perspective. Participants explain that seeing other points of view is not a one sided process of the dominant culture attempting to understand the silenced 'other'. Mutual processes of understanding occur as Aboriginal Australians strive for a deeper understanding of the point of view of non-Indigenous Australians, as seen in the following interview selection:

> *An Aboriginal friend confided in me, for a long time she failed to understand how White people could own a large home with room to spare and not share it, when so many people are homeless. She eventually realised that we were a*

different culture, and she learned to accept when our ways differed from the ways of her people (Participant interview 10.11).

Understanding Historical Influences on Current Situations

So it's important to understand what happened in the past, so that you can see what is happening today and be able to put today's problems in the context of what happened then. And today's problems are a direct result of past practices (Participant interview 11.14).

In the participants' experience of conflict transformation, it is essential to develop an accurate understanding of the history of events that have shaped current conflict. Participants maintain that if parties to the conflict do not have an understanding of how the current conflict is shaped by the historical processes of colonisation, power imbalances between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians will continue to be maintained or exacerbated. Participants' experience contrasts with theory and practice of Western conflict resolution in which historical knowledge regarding conflict is often seen to prejudice the otherwise impartial and unbiased facilitators, as described in research by Burton (1996).

Participants maintain that historically accurate facts, rather than romantic ideas or propaganda, are important in building a sound basis for the positive social change that characterises conflict transformation. One of the Aboriginal participants gives the following comments regarding the role of historical fact in the processes of conflict transformation:

With regards to the Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal situation that reconciliation in Australia is addressing, honesty about the process, honesty about what has happened. Anything in the name of reconciliation that is based on half-truths, myths, fantasy and an unwillingness to let it all hang out so to speak, is destined to failure. My view is that you can only go forward on the basis of saying, 'Well, this has happened. It's shocking awful and it's happened. What are we going to do about it?' (Participant Interview 1.19).

Deep understanding of historical facts goes beyond intellectual analyses of historical fact. Deep understanding also includes comprehension of the effects of past conflict upon the hearts and lives of the people enmeshed in the conflict, as one of the non-Indigenous participants describes in his experience of holistic comprehension:

Awareness involves the feeling, emotional, intuitive and spiritual levels. It is a holistic event derived from experience, rather than simply an idea attained through an intellectual process (Participant interview 6.1).

Both non-Indigenous and Aboriginal participants emphasise the importance of understanding the impact of history on current conflicts. One of the non-Indigenous participants describes his experience of the relationship between colonial history and current conflict:

> *You can't have reconciliation before you are truthful and recognise truthfully and accept the facts of history. We need to address the facts.*
> *And the facts are:*
> *In the case of the Aboriginal population,*
> *They were disenfranchised,*
> *They were disowned of their land,*
> *They were colonised,*
> *They were considered to be non-people.*
> *They were living here,*
> *But they weren't recognised as humans.*
> *Their human rights were denied.*
> *They are still as a result*
> *In a very poor and disadvantaged situation.*
> *We need to address basic tenets of humanity.*
> *That if somebody else suffers,*
> *We need to be compassionate.*
> *We need to be able to empathise and sympathise.*
> *We need to be able to say*
> *To the people who have suffered,*
> *'I'm sorry that happened.'*
> *'I'm sorry for the suffering that caused.'*
> *As a result I can try to at least improve the situation now*
> *(Participant interview 4.9-4,10).*

Aboriginal participants explain the need to develop understanding of the history of colonial impact upon Indigenous Australians. In the following interview selection, one of the Aboriginal participants describes her experience of the effects of the restrictive policies of colonisation:

> *There's a lot of things*
> *That have been interfered with*
> *Through the colonising process.*
> *Some things our parents*
> *Could have taught us*
> *And they didn't.*
> *That's very sad because*
> *That's the pressures of colonialism*
> *On how people conducted themselves.*
> *Our dad, he was a full speaker*
> *Of his own language,*
> *But he never taught us.*
> *There are things like that*
> *That are very sad*
> *(Participant Interview 13.8).*

Participants explain the importance of developing understanding of the effects of colonisation upon both Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. The silencing of Indigenous epistemologies, for example, has affected both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Indigenous people mourn the loss of traditional methods and struggle to create new methodologies that integrate traditional ways of knowing. Many non-Indigenous Australians express frustration with what they consider to be fragmented Indigenous knowledge. At times, non-Indigenous Australians are told that a way of knowing and operating exists that is different from dominant Western practice. However, due to disruptions suffered through colonisation, Aboriginal Australians may not be able to articulate Indigenous epistemologies in a manner that non-Indigenous Australians consider precise. One of the non-Indigenous participants describes the challenge of working through the frustrations of the legacy of colonisation on Indigenous epistemologies:

> *You have to be incredibly strong to constantly deal with it. You know, constantly Black people are saying, 'Hey, we're sick of you doing it the White way.' And then you would say, 'What is the alternative way?' And people couldn't say, or the alternative way was even more politically manipulative. I just got confused and ended up becoming racialised. I'm so sick of Black people saying, 'We're sick of doing it the White way.' And then they can't come up with their own way, so it's just confusing. It's dealing with that whole thing... At our best moments, we stand with them. But at our worst moments, when we are being attacked, it's really difficult, because you're doing your best, but you're being attacked about the White way. So, intellectually those emotions are very challenging. Emotionally it's about uncertainty and intellectually it's that question of, 'Well, what's this other way of doing, knowing, what is that about....(Participant interview 12.1).*

In other instances, Aboriginal Australians may retain traditional knowledge regarding conflict transformation and not be willing to share it with non-Indigenous Australians. Aboriginal Australians explain that Western research regarding Indigenous knowledge is not often used in ways that benefit Indigenous communities. Thus, many Indigenous Australians are reluctant to share their knowledge with academic researchers, as described in the following participant interview:

> *The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, they're sort of the most studied group of people. How have they benefited from that? It seems as if everyone else has benefited from that, but they really haven't benefited (Participant interview 11.24).*

Participants describe the importance of understanding the impact of colonial history upon Indigenous ways of knowing. Aboriginal Australian epistemologies

continue to be suppressed or dismissed as primitive, particularly in formal academic research, policy making and political discourse. Conflict is often processed solely on the political agenda, terminology and worldview of mainstream Western culture, as described by the following Aboriginal participant:

> *I find it very frustrating that Aboriginal people continually respond to what governments say. There's never any equal negotiation. The government puts up its plan, couched in its terms. That only allows Aboriginal people to respond to what they had put up. While they say they have Aboriginal advisors and they have Aboriginal bodies, it is all still couched in White terms of reference. It's never couched in Aboriginal concerns. The words they use (like reconciliation) it's not a word we would even use. Whose word is it? It's not our word and we weren't asked (Participant interview 13.18).*

Participants explain that the historical impact of colonisation continues to shape power relationships within conflict transformation. Some of the non-Indigenous participants experience a struggle between using their own expertise in dealing with conflict, and supporting self-determination through the implementation of Indigenous methodologies. They explain that they find themselves challenged by choosing between programs which they consider to have been proven successful, or programs designed by Indigenous Australians which they believe have a high probability of failure. One of the non-Indigenous participants describes her experience of struggling with these power issues inherent in colonised countries:

> *I travel up and down the coast working with local reconciliation groups. I'm very conscious of not imposing a process upon a group even when I think it is the most effective pattern. I find it quite difficult. With experience you can see where groups maybe are going to go down a particular track and you want to prevent them doing that. But I believe that reconciliation should be very much guided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and that their agendas must be met. One group wanted a friendship group. I'm coming from this gung ho reconciliation point of view of wanting an effective information giving, knowledge based action group who is capable of achieving reconciliation. I had to sit back and let it go. I'm going to have to address that at some stage. I'm going to have to come to some agreement with people about what a reconciliation group is (Participant interview 11.18).*

The historical impact of colonisation continues to affect conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. Nevertheless, many non-Indigenous Australians refuse to deal with the complexities of colonial history and the intergenerational trauma engendered by colonisation (Reynolds 1999). Participants explain that many non-Indigenous Australians blame Aborigines themselves for current situations in Aboriginal health, housing and education. Blaming 'the victim' is a process of colonisation that allows members of the

dominant group to perceive themselves as distanced from the conflict (Brady 1994, pp.132-144). Participants in conflict transformation emphasise that blame hinders the transformation of conflict. In contrast, conflict transformation involves an awareness of the ways in which colonisation affects the dominant group in society, as the following Aboriginal participant explains:

> *It's those things that cause me concern, in terms of the wider population not understanding what has happened. All the blame goes back onto the victims, the Indigenous population. People want to interpret through White eyes. They like to create definitions for the Indigenous population and fit them in. They don't see that in a colonising process, that's affected them also. They don't see themselves as being affected, but something has happened to them that they can look at other human beings and make those sort of judgements. Colonialism is a two edged sword and it affects everyone, not just the Indigenous population (Participant interview 13.12).*

Developing Deep Understanding: Acknowledging and Respecting Other Realities

Understanding only surface culture without understanding the deeper underlying structures of worldview leads to stereotypical judgements and further conflict (Avruch 1998). Participants explain that conflict transformation requires an understanding of the deeper aspects of participants' worldview. Their experiences of the integral role of understanding worldview contrasts starkly with that of Western conflict resolution scholars such as Burton (1996) and Fischer and Ury (1981, 1997) who maintain that their techniques transcend worldview.

Participants maintain that the processes of conflict transformation involve understanding the worldview of the parties involved in conflict. Australians engaged in conflict transformation explain that the worldview of the Aboriginal participants has largely been silenced through the processes of colonisation. In contrast most Aboriginal Australians have had extensive experience of the dominant worldview of non-Indigenous Australians.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the worldview of Aboriginal Australians differs markedly from Western worldview. The central aspects of Aboriginal worldview that affect conflict transformation are interconnectedness, conceptualisations of time, relationships, and land.

Interconnectedness is one of the central characteristics of Aboriginal worldview that impacts conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. Aboriginal participants describe the difficulties involved in trying to

get non-Indigenous Australians to understand the web of interrelationships that impact upon conflict transformation. In Aboriginal worldview, these interrelationships link spirituality, land, time and relationships as aspects which affect the way in which conflict is conceptualised, approached and transformed. In mainstream Australian culture, this holistic approach is seldom recognised or respected.

> There could hardly be two more different cultures than the one we brought with us from nineteenth century Britain, almost entirely detached from the cosmic and religious dimensions of existence, and traditional Aboriginal culture with its profound sense of reverence and ritual. So far, we non-Aborigines have remained largely ignorant and contemptuous of that culture (Brady 1994, p. 142).

Spirituality is one of the central characteristics of worldview that impacts upon conflict transformation involving Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. Aboriginal Australians stress the integral role that spirituality plays in all parts of the human experience, including the practical and the political, as expressed in this interview selection from an Aboriginal participant:

> *Spirituality permeates all aspects of Aboriginal life. The concept which encompasses Aboriginal spirituality is what has become known as The Dreaming by which all components of the Australian landscape are significant, and through which the spiritual and political identities of groups and individuals are formed. It is the organising logic of Aboriginal life, the Law, which encompasses all things. The realm of Spiritual existence is not divorced from the material world, but embedded in it. It is all things past, present and future; therefore, it is ever present and ongoing (Participant interview 3.10).*

In contrast, in dominant Australian culture, spirituality is seldom acknowledged when processing conflict (Beattie 1997). The dominant Australian culture largely separates the realm of the spirit from the realm of the practical and political, as expressed in the following statement from a non-Indigenous Australian:

> We are also strangely clumsy, almost illiterate, in matters of feeling and intuition. Even those of us who call ourselves 'believers' seem to separate belief from our ordinary lives, lack a map of the spirit to guide our practical actions (Brady 1994, p. 172).

Silencing the spiritual aspects of the experience of conflict transformation perpetuates conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. In the following quotation a non-Indigenous Australian describes the alienation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians that accompanies the silencing of Indigenous spirituality:

> Traditional Aboriginal culture represents a way of being rooted in the past, in the living world and in the moral universe which we've lost in pursuit of material rewards. It is a culture which acknowledges the needs of the spirit as well as the body, seeing human beings as part of the larger web of existence, not as lonely individuals in competition with one another (Brady 1994, p. 143).

In Aboriginal Australians' worldview, understanding conflict and conflict transformation require understanding the spiritual basis of the experience. The following explanation from an Aboriginal participant describes the role of spirituality in her experience of conflict transformation:

> *Many people are involved in reconciliation, including those who lived here before and now live in spirit. In my experience, I have seen both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people receive information through dreams, visions and guidance by the spirits. I believe the spiritual is an essential part of reconciliation.*
>
> *Well, for my own people,*
> *We are very spiritual, eh?*
> *My whole house is looked after*
> *By my mum and my dad.*
> *If anything goes bad*
> *I just talk to them.*
> *I believe in the spirits.*
> *I believe in the spirits getting us to reconcile.*
> *Menmuny is my great-grandfather*
> *His mother had this dream*
> *He told us about it all*
> *Through the years.*
> *She dreamt of the cultural changes*
> *That were going to happen.*
> *She asked Menmuny not to accept*
> *The missionaries.*
> *But he had no choice.*
> *He's always regretted*
> *Not listening to her dreams*
> *Because of the terrible cultural changes*
> *That happened on the mission.*
> *They were terrible for his people*
> *We believe in dreams*
> *(Participant interview 2.17-2.18).*

Participants explain that relationship with land is another aspect of Australian Aboriginal worldview that shapes conflict transformation. In speaking of conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, one Aboriginal participant declared:

> *For us, the starting and end point, I suppose, is always that relationship with land. Treating it in a certain way. If it could begin and end with that, then we're well on the way, I reckon, well on the way (Participant interview 9.40).*

Furthermore, participants maintain that conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians requires a transformation of relationship with the land. This contrasts with the dominant Western conflict worldview, in which land is considered to be a commodity (Galtung 1990). In the following interview selection, one of the Aboriginal participants explains that in transforming conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians, it is also essential to improve relationship with the land:

> *When people talk about reconciliation as between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people only, I think they've got it wrong. There has to be a healing of the rift between people and the earth. The earth can sustain just a certain amount of damage and we are reaching that point. When making decisions about actions that will lead to positive outcomes, we've got to consider what effect that action will have on the earth (Participant interview 1.46).*

Aboriginal conceptualisations of time also impact upon conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. Aboriginal conceptualisations of *right time*, of engaging in actions when all aspects of a situation are favourable, contrast with the linear timelines of non-Indigenous Australians. One of the Aboriginal participants in this research describes the interconnections that supported their groups' decisions regarding *right time* in regard to land use agreements. The history of the relationship between the Mayor and the Aboriginal peoples of the island, consideration of future generations, recognition of the Aboriginal peoples as traditional owners, and recognition of shared responsibilities all combined to indicate the *right time* for a land use agreement. This agreement became an integral aspect of transforming conflict between this group of Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians:

> *We believe that if something is meant to happen the forces are there to support it. We believe it very strongly. With Redland Shire itself, the mayor of Redland has lived at Cleveland Shire all of his life. He went to the Cleveland High School. There is a law in this state that (once those other harsh legislations for Aboriginal people were lifted) people have to go to school 'til they are 15 years of age. Which means high school. So they used to have to travel across to the mainland everyday to go to school. Where they met the children from the mainland. One of whom is now the mayor of Redland. That helped. He knew people, he had been at school with them, he played footie with them. He had been over at the island fishing and seen them there and been fishing with some of them and doing those things that young people do. So he had that understanding. He knew that people weren't all the terrible things that are often reported in the media. He knew enough, that when the approach was made to Redland Shire, about an agreement, and it was made by the land council, the mayor said, 'We would be interested, what do you propose?' So they went away and put something together and it was a lot of negotiation. So it was learning how one another works, how one another perceive the future*

> *for the area and reaching a middle line I suppose, but most importantly, is in principles, the basic principles for this to occur. There's a recognition of one another, that the Redland Shire Council recognised the people of Quandamooka as traditional owners and that the people of Quandamooka recognised the Redland Shire Council as having responsibility in terms of local government for that area. And from that point they were moving on a process agreement which has been set up in little bits, so there's lots of things happening. Some strategies have to be put into place. Let's do it properly, so these things are here for future generations. But by sitting down and talking, through negotiation, through mediation sometimes, they've got to a point where they agree. It's set a good example that when the time comes when they can go to the state to look at recognition like Native Title, they've got a good record anyway. And it's set an example for the rest of the country (Participant interview 3.21).*

In Aboriginal worldview, *right time* is not determined by clock or calendar, and conflict transformation processes may require a significantly longer period of time than those allowed in Western ways of processing conflict. In the following interview selection, one of the Aboriginal participants describes the long time span that may accompany considerations of *right time* in regard to transforming conflict:

> *In community, I wait. And that's the way. You wait. You observe. You can see. You know the way, that it's a slow way. You wait and people invite you (Participant interview 3.6).*

In Aboriginal Australians' view of conflict transformation, *right time* involves taking enough time to properly address the conflict. This contrasts with the dominant Western worldview of time as urgent meeting of deadlines (Galtung 1990). In the following interview selection, one of the Aboriginal participants describes the challenge of utilising the concepts of *right time* in transforming conflict within the constraints of dominant Western society:

> *That could be remedied to a significant extent by the simple process of allowing time. Most people would acknowledge the challenge that that represents, with time being such a commodity that is treated in a way that detracts from quality in life (Participant interview 1.6).*

Participants explain that the concept of *right time* affects conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in regard to the release of particular information that may be requested of Aboriginal Australians. In Aboriginal worldview, there is a right time for releasing knowledge. Responses to direct requests for information may not be honoured if the person requesting the information has not adequately demonstrated responsible behaviour. In the following interview selection, one of the non-Indigenous participants explains his

understanding of Aboriginal knowledge being shared only to certain people at specific times:

> *In sharing worldviews and experiences and spiritualties there is this question of secret and sacred. That's important as a respect thing. You should get that information when you are ready for it (Participant interview 6.1).*

The concept of relationship is another characteristic of worldview that impacts upon conflict transformation. Aboriginal participants describe conflict transformation as affecting all in the community, not just the individuals directly involved in a particular conflict. As discussed previously in Chapter Five, Indigenous Australians conceptualise the individual as 'self in other', in contrast to non-Indigenous Australians who primarily consider individuals to be autonomous, independent units (Armstrong & Smith 1999). An example of Indigenous Australian perception of individuals-in-relationship is found in the following statement by one of the Aboriginal participants:

> *The old ones had taught me as they had been taught, those old ways of reading the ground. Of what I might aim for, for the group that I carry with me, inside me (Participant interview 3.6).*

Participants maintain that understanding the largely silenced Aboriginal worldview is a critical aspect of the processes of conflict transformation. They emphasise acknowledging and respecting Aboriginal concepts of time, relationships, spirituality and land. One of the non-Indigenous participants describes his experience of coming to understand the interconnected aspects of Aboriginal worldview, including spirituality:

> *I think being open to the other's perceptions, worldviews is really important. Paying respect and valuing another culture opens up possibilities to come together. By not dismissing, say an Aboriginal perspective, but opening up to thinking your own point of view is not the only one and being humble enough to think you could learn from others is crucial. I think around 80% of the world are meant to be believers of some sort. If you're dismissing that belief, then you've got no hope really of coming together and resolving any conflicts in a really deep way. The Western Science model shouldn't be seen as the only way of looking at what's valid. When forming those bonds with my friends, I was showing that I was willing to accept the way they saw the world. That made them open up to me. And of course it takes time and patience as well as humility and openness. We hurry things too much with the modern world. Things that might seem fantastic can be sort of common place for some people. If you've got a very narrow view of what reality is then the possibility for broad healing is lessened.(Participant interview 6.12).*

Summary

Participants' experience of conflict transformation includes the development of deep understanding through coming to understand the point of view of others involved in the conflict, through understanding the impact of colonial history on current conflict, and through respecting and acknowledging other worldviews. These experiences contrast with the techniques described in Western conflict resolution theory, as I discuss in the following section.

Deep Understanding and Conflict Studies

As discussed in the previous sections of this chapter, participant's experience of effective conflict transformation is characterised by the development of deep understanding. Deep understanding increases awareness and acceptance of differing worldviews, understanding of historical impact on current conflict, and enables participants to develop a holistic understanding of the other's point of view. The findings regarding deep understanding inform several aspects of the discipline of conflict studies.

As discussed previously in Chapter Four, in the dominant Western models of conflict resolution, knowledge of the historical background of conflict is not considered necessary. Dominant scholars of Western conflict resolution, such as Fisher & Ury (1994) and Burton (1996, pp. 60-61) maintain that knowledge regarding the historical background of the conflict can be detrimental, biasing facilitators in favour of one of the parties to the conflict. In contrast, Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians who experience conflict transformation maintain that accurate, extensive historical knowledge is crucial to developing deeper understanding of the other's point of view.

Scholars of the dominant Western models of conflict resolution claim their techniques develop a level of communication that transcends culture (Avruch & Black 1990). In contrast, Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australian participants in conflict transformation maintain that understanding, respecting and accommodating cultural differences in worldview are essential processes in the transformation of conflict. Participants describe cultural differences in worldview as an integral aspect of conflict transformation, which can neither be omitted nor transcended.

The holistic experience of the participants also contrasts with Western problem solving methods which are largely intellectual. Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australian participants describe conflict transformation as integrating spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical experience.

Participants' experience in developing deep understanding more closely reflects the transformative practices described by Lederach (1997) and Bush and Folger (1994). Bush and Folger (1994, p. 20) describe conflict transformation as including 'acknowledgment and concern for others as fellow human beings'. Aboriginal and non-Indigenous participants involved in conflict transformation experience similar processes of developing deep understanding that leads to increased concern for others.

Participants' experience of conflict transformation has the potential to inform the practice of nonviolent processing of conflict. Their experience raises challenges to dominant practices in regard to the role of adequate knowledge regarding the impact of historical events, acknowledgement and respect for differences in worldview, and holistic experiences of developing understanding.

As expressed within this chapter, participant's experiences of developing deep understanding form one of the central themes of conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. These experiences often engender deep emotional response. In the next chapter, I discuss the related theme of utilising the power of emotions within the processes of conflict transformation.

CHAPTER NINE

TRANSFORMING EMOTIONS

In this chapter I discuss the role of emotions in transforming conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. Participants describe processes of conflict transformation as engendering intense emotional response. Comprehending the impact of colonisation upon people's lives is more than an intellectual experience, it is also a deeply emotional one. The following theme synthesises Aboriginal and non-Indigenous participants' emotional experience in conflict transformation.

Conflict transformation involves

- **understanding emotions**
- **utilising the power of emotions**

In the first section of this chapter, I discuss participants' experiences of developing understanding of intense emotional experiences involved in working to transform the conflicts engendered by colonisation. In the second section, I discuss participants' use of emotional expression to assist in transforming conflict. In the third section, I suggest ways in which these findings might inform the discipline of conflict studies.

Understanding Emotions: Developing Acceptance of Emotional Expression

> We're all walking around in pain. Aboriginal people because they're living with the truth and white people because they find it hard to deal with the truth (Boori Monty Pryor 2000, p. 102).

In conflict transformation, participants find it important to acknowledge and accept intense emotional expression. Both Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians express intense emotions in the experiences of dialogue and deep understanding that are integral to conflict transformation. As discussed in Chapter Three, the importance of emotional experience is reflected in many models of Indigenous consensual processing. In the following subsection, I discuss Aboriginal

Australian's intense expressions of emotion in regard to the losses they continue to sustain through the processes of colonisation. I then discuss non-Indigenous participants' coming to understand the emotional experience of non-Indigenous Australians.

Understanding Emotions: Aboriginal Emotions in Response to Colonisation

In conflict transformation, Aboriginal Australians express intense sorrow and anger at the losses they suffer through experiences of colonisation. Acknowledging and respecting these emotional expressions are integral parts of the participants' experience in transforming conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. In the following quote, one of the Aboriginal participants describes the intense emotional reactions of Aboriginal Australians within conflict transformation workshops which she facilitates:

> *I've also had groups, those kinds of groups, exactly the same people with those kinds of attitudes where I've had my people ...in there. And my own people want to belt them up, tell them 'This is what you have done to me...you've destroyed my people and my land. This is the impact you have had on us, and this is not ancient history, this is ...the history today. This is the here and now. It's nothing new. This is not something that is dead and gone. This is something alive and lived with us'...and nothing that has been said there is not true. Every ounce of it is true...(Participant interview 14.23).*

In conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians, intense emotional experience brings a depth of understanding that is impossible to reach through intellectual comprehension alone. For example, emotional experience assists participants in connecting with the generational traumas engendered by colonisation (Duran & Duran 1995; Hazelhurst 1994; Napoleon 1991). In the following citation for example, Henry Reynolds shares one of his experiences of generational trauma within colonised social groups:

> On another occasion I was confronted by a young Aboriginal man who stopped me in the street. He was very drunk; his glance was unguarded. He put a hand on my shoulder, staring intently at me. He didn't say a word; nor did he need to. His brown eyes were riveting, brimming with overpowering emotion, with hatred and contempt. Once again it wasn't particularly personal. It was ancestral and it was awful. It was also a history lesson of the most powerful kind, more telling than any amount of research in the archives. For that long moment I embodied the saga of conquest. I was held responsible for the past. I was migloo and I was implicated. As the young man gripped my shoulder I was gripped with fear, expecting any moment to be attacked. I relived and understood the terror that so often and so

> widely ran like a powerful current beneath the surface of settler societies all over the world (Reynolds 1999, p. 40).

In conflict transformation, participants express a range of intense emotions. Both non-Indigenous and Aboriginal participants emphasise the importance of acknowledging the intense sorrow and grief that are common emotional responses to conflicts engendered through the processes of colonisation. In the following interview selection, one of the Aboriginal participants expresses the sorrow she experiences when she shares her family's experience of colonisation. She often tells this story in conflict transformation workshops:

> *In Maytown,*
> *Because of the gold,*
> *They got heaps and heaps of people,*
> *Mainly Chinese goldminers.*
> *They went and raped the women,*
> *Had kids and whatever.*
> *My mum was a result of that.*
> *They practically destroyed the whole Aboriginal culture there.*
> *They took them away.*
> *They took heaps and heaps of them away.*
> *Mum used to always tell me about that.*
> *That was a tragic part of our history.*
> *That was gold.*
> *For ourselves it was a terrible, tragic time.*
> *Mum had nine brothers and sisters*
> *And the nine of them were taken.*
> *Her mum was shot and killed trying to save them all.*
> *The whole nine of them were sent away,*
> *Sent throughout Queensland to all the different missions.*
> *We found an Aunty this year.*
> *I really need to get to see her.*
> *(Participant interview 2.3).*

Participants maintain that in transforming conflict it is necessary to bring the injustices of colonisation into conscious awareness. This awareness often involves intense emotional response. Participants explain that it is necessary to experience the pain that accompanies the processes of illuminating previously silenced experiences of colonisation in order to move into healing and positive action designed to ameliorate the conflict. In the following quote, one of the Aboriginal participants describes her awareness of the intense emotions that accompany the process of bringing colonial injustices to conscious awareness to assist in transforming conflict:

> *As painful as it is to hear, I want non-Aboriginal people to understand the intent behind some government policies relating to Aboriginal people. The intent was to get rid of Blacks. And we live with disruption in many aspects of*

our lives because of these policies. We will always be here and we need to find ways to improve our lives together.

We want people to understand
Why we are here.
Why we are where we are today.
Government policies were to get rid
Of the Black in us
But they couldn't do it
And we are still around.
We'll be here forever, eh?
(Participant interview 2.11).

In the following section, I explore non-Indigenous participants' emotional experience in transforming conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. Participants describe incidences of painful emotions both in response to Aboriginal anger, and in response to the realisation of the ways in which colonisation has wounded Aboriginal peoples. I explore these concepts to illustrate the importance of understanding and utilising emotions within conflict transformation.

Understanding Emotions: Non-Indigenous Response to Aboriginal Anger

Overt emotional expression is part of many Aboriginal Australians' approach to processing conflict (Langton 1988). However, many non-Indigenous participants feel frustrated and hurt when Aborigines express anger toward them. Non-Indigenous participants in this study feel they are in solidarity with Aboriginal people and are discouraged to find themselves the recipients of Aboriginal expressions of anger. One of the non-Indigenous participants described his frustration at coping with hostile Aboriginal response to his efforts at transforming conflict:

An Aboriginal woman who came to the same church that a whole heap of us would come on a Sunday night, she was so angry all the time. And she would get up and just rant and rave about one thing or another. Now most of the people in that congregation were people that felt they were doing as much as they could. They actually wanted to know what to do, but the only thing they were ever approached to do was give money. But if people said, 'You know we want to support you in other ways, we don't know what.' There was never anything positive or constructive, so it was always just: provide money and be the ears that heard the anger, and that just eroded people over the years. And I sat with that congregation for seven years and I distinctly remember people saying, 'You know, fuck, we're not the people... we're wanting solidarity and we're the ones copping the anger. We've had enough of this. I mean, I don't need to hear this any more...' Even the Murri tent at Woodford Folk festival, there's a Murri tent where people are really angry, a lot of Indigenous people

get up, and unfortunately people that go to that tent are the people that are in solidarity and you just have to cop it (Participant interview 12.14).

After experiencing the anger of Aboriginal Australians, many non-Indigenous Australians avoid further dialogue or relationship with Aborigines. One of the non-Indigenous participants describes his previous experience of avoiding conflict transformation with Aboriginal people because of the intense anger he encountered:

I think a lot of us didn't know where to make contact with Aboriginal people other than down at Musgrave Park in West End and that's a pretty scary environment. People were drunk often at Musgrave Park, so that was scary. It just wasn't easy to build relationships, there wasn't a starting point. You go to the park and try and talk to people and they just tell you to fuck off or go and buy a carton of beer. I think we were inexperienced and didn't know where to start so unconsciously it was just easier to stay away. We didn't actually make any progress, we consciously stayed away, or unconsciously, it was just too difficult to start the relationships. We were pretty green in terms of knowing how to deal with anger, not experienced enough to know that that's okay, take the anger and build through that. Just too scary for some of us, especially when there's other groups you can work with who aren't angry (Participant interview 12.9).

Aboriginal participants also describe the ways in which continual unmoderated expressions of anger hinder the processes of conflict transformation. They maintain that overt expressions of anger lead to further guilt, hostility and racism on the part of non-Indigenous Australians who perceive themselves as being unfairly attacked. One of the Aboriginal participants describes her experience in conflict transformation workshops. She describes the ways in which intense expressions of anger perpetuate alienation between the Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians:

I see and feel and touch and smell and taste the pain of my own people that are in there. But I also see how they are making a bigger rod for our back in terms of fixing things up and mending things that we have. And I see it all and I see how someone, some non-Aboriginal person who was on side now feels so angry and bitter because they... feel as though they have been personally attacked and blamed for the breakdown in this when they have come with an open heart. And their open heart has been taken out and spat upon. And so what we do is all go into belting each other up (Participant 14.24).

Non-Indigenous participants experience the benefits of maintaining dialogue with Aboriginal people even when faced with intense anger. Through understanding the history and the reality of Aboriginal experience, non-Indigenous participants come to understand the source of Aboriginal expressions of anger. Through understanding the source of Aboriginal anger, non-Indigenous participants become more accepting of it. Furthermore, non-Indigenous participants describe acceptance of anger as a way of demonstrating their commitment to improving relationships

with Aboriginal Australians. One of the non-Indigenous participants shares his commitment to work through anger as a way of supporting the transformation of conflict between the two groups:

> *Dealing with the anger is very critical. It's having a framework in your head that enables you to deal with that. That takes maturity. When you are young, you haven't got that. When you try and take that step forward, you don't know actually how to deal with that anger, or I certainly didn't and a whole range of my friends didn't. Now I could deal with it a lot more maturely and see beyond the anger to the pain and beyond the pain to, 'Hey, I'm testing you guys to see how committed you are,' those kind of sub-messages (Participant interview 12.14).*

At times, non-Indigenous participants experience Aboriginal anger which to them appears to be triggered by 'seemingly insignificant incidences' (Reynolds 1999, p. 38). However, Aboriginal participants maintain that current conflicts are linked to past injustices suffered through colonisation. Therefore, an emotional response to current conflict may well resonate with the hurts of previous generations. In the following quote, one of the Aboriginal participants shares her awareness of generational trauma as a factor in transforming conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians:

> *I had to heal my own pain and frustration...and trauma around this that I've inherited from my parents, and my grandparents and from my great-grandparents and from my great-great-grandparents, from my ancestors who have been wounded...(Participant interview 14.7).*

As discussed in Chapter Two, in many Indigenous worldviews, past and present are interconnected. Therefore, conflicts involving past generations may be experienced as intensely as though they had occurred recently (Hall 1977). Henry Reynolds describes his experience of the impact of generational trauma on conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians:

> What encircled Aborigines – and to a lesser extent Islanders- was an all-embracing, inherited sense of forced subordination....The terrible past of violence and dispossession still haunted the living. It could be seen shaping social reactions, determining means of address. It could be briefly glimpsed in fleeting expressions of face or eye. Many families had their own private stories of how white men had killed, raped and brutalised their kin in their grandfather's and great-grandfathers time. They were stories of fear and terror. And with each retelling fear was recalled, and passed on, to be constantly refreshed by smaller, less significant, more recent acts of oppression... Incidents or exchanges which may have seemed insignificant to white people were often far more insulting and hurtful to indigenous people because they echoed down long corridors of subordination, humiliation and embarrassment (Reynolds 1999, p. 38).

In addition to painful emotional experiences of Aboriginal anger, non-Indigenous participants often experience grief and sorrow when the social injustice which Aboriginal Australians experience is brought into conscious awareness. In the following interview selection, a non-Indigenous participant shares the intense emotions she experienced as she came to understand Indigenous Australian experience which had previously been silenced:

> *I was very involved with World Vision. And Neville Bonner was their patron. His biography came out and I got it and read it and suddenly I thought, 'With all my years, how ignorant I was.' I was totally unaware they were not allowed to go to school in White schools. When I discovered Neville could not go to school with White children, that was the first I even knew and I realised that there is an awful lot that I don't know. And so after that, I bought other Aboriginal people's biographies and autobiographies and read books by Henry Reynolds. And I educated myself a bit in that way to have a better understanding of what happened. I was horrified and became more horrified as I went along with what I've learnt and I am still being horrified by so many things (Participant interview 10.8).*

Aboriginal participants experience an increased openness toward non-Indigenous Australians who share their intense emotional experiences of conflict transformation. Aboriginal participants often express surprise at the intense emotional response of non-Indigenous Australians who are in the process of developing deep understanding, with Aboriginal participants explaining that they were accustomed to most non-Indigenous Australians seeming fairly comfortable with existing situations. After comprehending the intense emotional reaction of non-Indigenous participants in response to learning of the traumas of colonisation, Aboriginal participants express feelings of being more accepted and valued by non-Indigenous Australians. In the following interview selection, one of the Aboriginal participants shares her response to the emotions expressed by non-Indigenous Australians involved in conflict transformation:

> *They're usually quite emotional. People can't believe what they're hearing, not only about the bad things, but about the depth of various aspects of Aboriginal culture that they never realised because they accepted the stereotypes out there. I wasn't expecting such emotionalism from Whitefellas. I didn't think they would care one way or another, or if it did, it touched them only slightly, not deeply. But it did (Participant interview 9.8).*

Summary

In the processes of conflict transformation, participants develop a deeper understanding of the emotional experience of both Aboriginal and non-Indigenous

Australians. Acknowledgement and acceptance of intense emotions allows the participants to move into more open dialogue. As they continue participating in the process of conflict transformation, they also experience the benefits of utilising emotional experience to effect sustainable conflict transformation. In the following section, I explore participants' experiences of utilising intense emotional expression to facilitate conflict transformation.

Utilising the Power of Emotions: Transforming Emotional Experience

> Then when we have truly opened ourselves to each other, the pain shared and revealed can transform to compassion and understanding (Auntie Pearl King 1997).

Participants describe ways in which they utilise emotions to assist in the transformation of conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. In the following subsection I discuss participants' experience of utilising emotions in ways that facilitate conflict transformation. I then discuss participants' experience of facilitating emotional experience of colonisation among non-Indigenous Australians who may have been shielded from such experience. In the third subsection, I discuss the ways in which participants use emotional experience to heal the wounds of colonisation.

Utilising emotions: Strategies that facilitate conflict transformation

Through the processes of conflict transformation, participants learn to utilise emotions in ways that develop compassion rather than aggression. Aboriginal participants describe their development of compassion as they come to realise that many non-Indigenous Australians are ignorant of Aboriginal political and personal realities. Non-Indigenous participants develop compassion as they come to understand more deeply the reality of Aboriginal Australian experience. In the following interview selection, one of the Aboriginal participants describes her transformation as she came to a deeper understanding of non-Indigenous experience of colonisation. She explains her experience of coming to understand compassionate rather than aggressive expressions of emotion as more effective in transforming conflict:

> *I just see that there is now a far better way of operating and negotiating with non-Indigenous people. You don't do it by going up and smacking them in the heads straight up front, which strangely enough, I used to do, and get aggro with it all and say, 'Why can't White people understand?' But I was operating on a certain level of: they had the background and the history that I did. And I know through the reconciliation process that they don't. They're starved of that knowledge. So I think it's all our responsibility as educators to keep educating the uneducated people (Participant interview 5.32).*

In conflict transformation, both Aboriginal and non-Indigenous participants stress the importance of utilising emotions in ways that engender emotional responses and increase the openness of those involved. To do this, participants employ strategies of modifying their own emotional expression in ways that encourage dialogue. They also employ conflict transformation strategies designed to decrease anger and resentment. In the following quote, one of the Aboriginal participants describes his experience of tempering anger in order to deepen and facilitate dialogue:

> *I've found you can catch more bees with honey. At the same token, I think part of reconciliation is being honest and firm. And I've tried to be that. I've tried to state my position firmly and strongly in public or privately, one-to-one when it is needed. But above all, my approach has been to not let it get to you to the point where you are angry. It's my firm belief that you don't make any advances and create any ultimate learning environment when you are angry (Participant interview 1.23-1.24).*

Participants explain that the processes of conflict transformation are facilitated by subtle emotional responses that avoid engendering hostile responses. One of the Aboriginal participants explains: 'when you get angry and you put people off, they switch off and they don't invite you back' (Participant interview 5.16). In the following quote, another Aboriginal participant describes her shift to more subtle expressions of emotion in order to maintain opportunities for dialogue:

> *I sort of went through stages: one is quite angry, you're younger, you're doing things in a confrontationist way. Then gradually the subtleties become more clear to you and the worthwhileness of using a more subtle approach (Participant interview 9.3).*

Participants in conflict transformation experience a shift in their emotional experience, developing compassion for others involved in the conflict as they come to understand the reality of all participants' experience. They also come to understand the effectiveness of employing strategies designed to encourage less hostile emotional response. However, transforming emotional expression is more than simply a strategy, it is based on compassionate understanding of the reality of

the other: their history, worldview and perspectives. In the following interview selection, one of the Aboriginal participants shares her story of developing genuine compassion for non-Indigenous Australians involved in conflict transformation. She also shares compassionate approaches she uses to decrease the occurrence of hostile emotional response in the processes of transforming conflict:

> *Look at me.*
> *Everything that people say*
> *About Aboriginal people*
> *has touched*
> *everyone of us in our families.*
> *I can't change that.*
> *That is what makes me*
> *Me.*
> *I demonstrate.*
> *I demonstrate in*
> *My interactions with people.*
> *I'm friendly.*
> *I'm very much committed in my work*
> *To people understanding*
> *What Aboriginal people are all about.*
> *Avoid the things that are going to upset people*
> *Like the guilt trips.*
> *I try to avoid confrontation.*
> *Not to make people feel guilty that it is their fault*
> *That these things have happened.*
> *That will turn people the other way,*
> *Will only lead to further racism.*
> *Some people go full on and say:*
> *Your lot are responsible*
> *For the policies and practices of separation*
> *Of people from land,*
> *Of children from families.*
> *All those things.*
> *Of people from language and culture.*
> *It's not the people of today*
> *I know.*
> *It was people a long time ago*
> *Who did it in ignorance*
> *And their own ethnocentricity.*
> *It's too late to do anything about that*
> *But changes can be made.*
> *You can explain that to people*
> *Or demonstrate it*
> *When they are ready*
> *(Participant interview 3.1).*

However, moderating emotional expression does not mean avoiding the painful aspects of conflict transformation altogether. As explained in the previous sections, utilising the power of emotions involves moderating expression of emotion in ways that open space for dialogue. Nevertheless, utilising the power of

emotions also involves feeling painful emotions, not suppressing them. One of the Aboriginal participants describes his experience of the benefits of accepting painful emotions as an integral part of conflict transformation:

> *So you've got to give and take and dance around it a bit, but always with the view that ultimately it is worth doing, it's worth feeling a bit of discomfort, sometimes a bit of pain, but at the end of the day, it works. Nothing is achieved without working for it. This is something that can be achieved and is worth achieving, (ending) the stand off that has been in existence for so long at all levels (Participant interview 1.28).*

Utilising the Power of Emotions: Facilitating Emotional Experience

Participants describe the necessity of facilitating emotional experience in order to increase commitment to transforming conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. Aboriginal participants, who live a daily experience of colonisation and racism, express a heightened awareness of the emotional parameters of the processes of conflict transformation. However, as members of the dominant social group which has largely benefited from colonisation, many non-Indigenous Australians remain shielded from the emotional impact of conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians (Tannoch-Bland 1997). Participants explain that a deeper understanding of Aboriginal Australians' emotional experience can be developed through role plays that put members of the dominant group in situations that evoke emotional responses. One of the non-Indigenous participants describes her experience of using role-plays to facilitate deeper understanding of Aboriginal emotional experience:

> *I do an exercise where I try to have people, for a very short time, experience disruption and lack of control, loss, grief in their lives. And it's quite effective. It involves building a snapshot of a person's life. For the purposes of this experience, the facilitator becomes an agent of the government. As that agent, I come around and I take one part of the snapshot away. We talk a little bit about what government policies were like for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. And go through that process until they've only got four pieces of the snapshot left. Some people are just begging: don't do any more. At the end, we have a debrief about the whole thing, picking up these pieces of paper and giving back to the participants so that they can be integrated at the end. It was very important for them for it to be integrated. That is a very powerful exercise for allowing people to have that experience of loss. I would say 'walking in other people's shoes,' trying to do that for a short period of time (Participant interview 11.13).*

Although experiences of intense emotion can be painful for participants, they can also lead to increased self-awareness and therefore more informed social action.

In the following interview selection, a non-Indigenous participant shares an experience in which some of his possessions were stolen. He immediately assumed they were stolen by Aboriginal people. He came to realise that his assumption was based on racist stereotypes and subsequently began to examine and modify his own racist behaviours. In the following excerpt, he describes the way his experience of intense anger transformed his self-awareness of his racism:

> *There was that powerful emotive,*
> *Angry response of my own*
> *Which helped me identify*
> *The degree to which*
> *Race was embedded within my sight.*
> *Intellectually it's easy to understand.*
> *It's only when you are pushed a bit further*
> *That you have to come to terms*
> *With the other experiences.*
> *That's really hard....*
> *That evokes a lot of emotion.*
> *You have to do a lot of reflection.*
> *I subscribe to the view*
> *That most of us are racist*
> *At a deep level.*
> *It's becoming conscious of that*
> *That is critical*
> *(Participant interview 12.30).*

Utilising the Power of Emotions: Healing the wounds of colonisation

> *...that's what it takes to be a peacemaker is that...knowing yourself, knowing your own pain, and being able to stay with and heal (Participant interview 14.12).*

Emotional expression facilitates healing the wounds of colonisation. In conflict transformation, participants heal many of the wounds of conflict when they are allowed to tell their stories and share their experience in an atmosphere of respect. In the following quote, an Aboriginal participant describes the healing she experienced when she told her personal story to a receptive public audience. I was in attendance at Teralba Park on the day she shared her story as part of a series of events for members of the Stolen Generations. She describes her experience of sharing her story of being one of the children forcibly removed from their Aboriginal parents:

> *On the 8th of March*
> *This year, you know*
> *When the Lord Mayor marched.*
> *We walked from Musgrave Park*

To King George Square.
There were five thousand people
To welcome us there.
People involved in the Stolen Generation.
He was the only one that ever said sorry
To the Stolen Generation.
He had a series of breakfasts,
He had a lot of events in all the parks
Where the stolen kids were taken.
I remember helping with the one
At Teralba Park.
That was a very moving experience for me.
It healed a lot of wounds.
It touched a lot of our hearts
(Participant interview 2.22).

Participants in conflict transformation maintain that healing is possible only when emotions have been fully expressed. Participants heal when they bring painful emotions to conscious awareness and expression. One of the Aboriginal participants expresses his experience of the healing that can be effected through the expression of previously silenced experience:

> *They have to be mature enough to accept that the pain that has been kept down for so long has got to come out. When these reconciliation meetings occur, when statements are made, there has to be an acceptance.*
>
> *When someone is given the opportunity*
> *To say something*
> *That they have not been allowed to say,*
> *They are going to say it*
> *And they are going to want to say it*
> *Again and again*
> *Until they feel*
> *As though they have released it.*
>
> *And on the same token, we've got to balance that. This is where I think younger Aboriginal people should take advantage of their vigour of youth and optimism of youth to say, 'Well, righto, this can work, we can work this through.' It is important to maintain to heal (Participant interview1.23-1.25).*

Participants also stress that healing involves an awareness of a range of human emotional experience. Participants in conflict transformation stress the importance of creating opportunities for the expression of many emotional experiences, not just the painful ones. They maintain that awareness of the full range of human emotional experience enhances healing the emotional wounds of colonisation. One of the Aboriginal participants shares the following story of his experience in facilitating a range of emotions to promote healing:

I try with Aboriginal people,
Who have got lots of issues to deal with,
I try to engage with them
At every opportunity that I can,
To engage with them
In a way that allows them
To express a non-bitter person,
To talk about the happy things in your life.
Look at the language that you are using.
Language that is bitter, resentful and critical
Can only, in the long term,
Build sickness in yourself.
People should work at their life
In a way that says:
There are more opportunities
For me to speak
Using language which is beautiful
Than there is for me
To use language
That is bitter and resentful and negative.
(Participant interview 1.40).

Healing the wounds of colonisation involves a willingness to acknowledge and learn from one's own emotional experience. Participants in conflict transformation emphasise the role of transforming emotions in the healing process. In the following quote, an Aboriginal elder describes part of his process of healing from racism and disenfranchisement by feeling his anger and moving through it to more accepting emotional response:

> As an Aboriginal man, I find that I have to justify existence on this earth every day and I get tired and angry, very angry. I've worked very hard to deal with the anger inside of me and in so doing have become better not bitter. I have been rewarded greatly for searching for the light in my own soul first (Pryor 2000, p. 120).

However, Aboriginal participants maintain that often they are expected to ease the emotional suffering that non-Indigenous Australians experience as they come to understand the silenced experiences of colonisation. Aboriginal participants emphasise that conflict transformation is facilitated when non-Indigenous people experience their emotions without asking for Aborignal people to in some way mitigate their suffering. In the following quotation, one of the Aboriginal participants shares a story of her experience of being expected to carry the burden of someone else's emotional response. The following selection describes an incident that occurred during a weekend workshop on colonisation, which the participant was facilitating:

...all the philosophical kind of stuff was the first day and the second day was more colonial kind of history stuff and I quite often used the film...basically to give myself a rest too, from talking (laughs) So I put that on, I had morning tea, put the film on between morning tea and lunch, you know ...and leave them to it because it was about an hour. And then come back and talk a little bit and then have lunch and, so that was quite a nice long break for them and for me. But this one Sunday,... I put the film on and then came back to the kitchen...and was sitting down with the Sunday paper somebody had brought and a huge bowl of chocolate biscuits and a cup of coffee and I thought, 'Oh, this is nice.' You know, I'll just sit here in the sun, the morning sun. And about a half an hour, not even that, about 10 or 15 minutes into the film, ... one lady came in, you know, and she, honestly, she just came in the door, and she was just sobbing. You know she was crying and everything... and she was saying to me.., 'Ah, I can't take it anymore and (laughing) I'm so sorry and I'm so... how can you ever forgive us? How can you people forgive us?' And she came up and I'm sitting there, and I thought, 'Oh, God.' Here I am just relaxing with the paper and enjoying this nice Sunday morning, you know, and oh look at that coffee, oh God! I put my arm around her, you know, ... saying, 'Never mind you know, look, I know it's very, you know.' I'm comforting her there. (laughs) I was thinking: 'God. (laughs) You can't have a break from this.' (laughter) It was on the verge of my tongue but I wouldn't say anything. I wouldn't say... look, don't worry about it, it's not your fault, that millions of people were massacred ... (laughing) and you aren't personally to blame. It's all right, you know.

Oh, God, you couldn't help it, you know, you just sort of went... It was a great temptation to be really sarcastic, you know. (laughing) Anyway I was comforting her there and she sat down in the room and ruined my morning (laughter) It's like that sometimes, you know... actually, I think it's an... unconscious thing. They actually want you to be their conscience. The conscience of the whole country. And they see Indigenous people, I'm sure, as this figure The figure doesn't even have to open its mouth or say anything or do anything, it just has to be just there, kind of mute. You know, silent. But... Europeans... see that as the conscience of the nation.(Participant interview 9: 6-7).

In some cases, emotional responses to the processes of colonisation are so intense that they block attempts at conflict transformation. Nevertheless, both Aboriginal and non-Indigenous participants in conflict transformation stress the importance of developing dialogue even with those most resistant to decreasing the alienation between people of both groups. Participants engage in dialogue that seeks to recognise interconnectedness of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. One of the Aboriginal participants describes the ways intense emotional experience may block the processes of conflict transformation. She shares the way in which she approaches Aboriginal people who resist conflict transformation with non-Indigenous Australians. She reminds them of their own non-Indigenous friends or family members who are examples of White Australians working to transform conflict:

With our own mob, they've been so severely hurt and downtrodden and deeply depressed by what Whites have done to them in this country that it's a lot more difficult to get those people on board. There are going to be some of our mob, Aboriginal people that will never want reconciliation. But I challenge any Aboriginal person to say that there's not one significant person they hold very dear to them that's not Aboriginal (Participant interview 5.40).

Summary

Conflict transformation involves understanding the emotional experiences of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Indigenous Australians, who regularly experience the painful effects of colonisation, express a range of intense emotions during conflict transformation. Non-Indigenous Australians involved in conflict transformation express frustration and hurt over being the targets of Aboriginal anger. They also express deep sorrow as they come to a deeper understanding of the ways in which colonisation has affected all Australians.

In conflict transformation, participants come to understand and accommodate intense emotion. However, they also explain that if emotions expressed in conflict transformation are too intense or protracted, participants may turn away, considering it too painful to work through. Therefore, participants come to utilise subtle expressions of emotion that open channels of communication. Furthermore, participants experience a transformation of their emotional experience as they develop genuine compassion for others involved in the conflict.

The participants' experiences of utilising the power of emotions have the potential to inform the discipline of conflict studies. In the following section I suggest ways in which the findings in this chapter might inform consensual processing of conflict.

Understanding and Utilising the Power of Emotions: Contributing to the Discipline of Conflict Studies

The findings discussed in this chapter articulate the role of emotional expression within conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. As such, they contribute to the discipline of conflict studies in which open emotional expression is a disputed topic. The findings from this study indicate that understanding and utilising the power of emotional experience are powerful tools in developing the open dialogue needed to increase understanding and build

relationships. They also indicate that emotional expression is an integral part of developing holistic comprehension of the mistrust and alienation that underlie conflicts between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

In contrast to the findings discussed in this chapter, the dominant Western models of conflict resolution and mediation consider emotional expression an aspect that has to be 'worked through' but is not considered essential in arriving at the critical processes of problem solving (Avruch 1998; Avruch & Black 1990, 1991). In Burton's (1997) and Fisher and Ury's (1981, 1997) problem solving approaches, emotional expression is considered important only insofar as it assists the parties to clear the air and move toward an agreement. In contrast, the findings discussed in this chapter indicate that emotional expression in and of itself is an important feature of conflict transformation in that it decreases alienation, increases understanding of other parties' experience, and assist in moving toward healing the wounds engendered through the conflict.

The lack of attention to emotional expression within Western conflict resolution has been criticised by other scholars such as Bush and Folger (1994) and Lederach (1997). Kochman's (1981) work on conflict styles of Black and White Americans also discusses the role of open emotional expression in processing conflict between people of differing cultural backgrounds. He points out that many White Americans believe that open expression of emotions hinders problem solving, whereas many Black Americans believe that open expression of emotions is crucial. Likewise, open emotional expression is much more widely accepted as a mark of honest intentions within Aboriginal societies than it is within non-Indigenous Australian society.

The findings discussed in this chapter also highlight the importance of moving beyond aggressive expressions of emotions to expressions that reflect genuine concern for all involved. In conflict transformation, such a shift in emotional expression can also be a powerful avenue for healing the emotional wounds that occur in conflicts engendered by colonisation, thus contributing to the sustainability of positive change.

These findings mirror many forms of Indigenous peacemaking in which emotions are considered to be an integral part of long term positive change in conflicts (Yazzie 1995). As discussed in Chapter Three, Indigenous peacemaking incorporates emotional expression to assist in decreasing the alienation between

those involved in conflict, thus incorporating healing and laying the foundations for the reintegration of harmony within the community.

The findings discussed in this chapter also support the assertions of Western conflict transformation scholars who maintain that emotional expression is an integral part of positive and sustainable transformation of conflict (Folger & Bush 1994, p. 271). In the following quotation, transformative mediation scholar Mark Umbreit (1997, p. 202) describes the importance of providing adequate opportunities for expressing and developing understanding of emotions within conflict transformation processes:

> Most conflicts develop within a larger emotional and relational context characterized by powerful feelings of disrespect, betrayal, and abuse. When these feelings about the past and current state of the relationship are not allowed to be expressed and heard in a healthy manner, an agreement might be reached but the underlying emotional conflict remains.

Western conflict transformation scholars Bush and Folger (1994) and Lederach (1997) also maintain that acceptance and support of emotional expression facilitates the process of healing the wounds sustained through both current and past conflict. One of the characteristics of transformative conflict processing is 'belief in the healing power... through a process of the involved parties helping each other through the sharing of their feelings' (Umbreit 1997, p. 204).

Summary

The findings discussed in this chapter indicate that open emotional expression within conflict transformation is an integral part of developing understanding as well as of healing the alienation that characterises colonised societies. As seen in the findings discussed in this and the previous chapter, the themes that characterise conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians address the development of deep understanding, and of utilising the power of emotions. These themes are interconnected, influencing each other rather than occurring in a linear fashion. As I discuss in the following chapter, both of these processes are also linked with the development of improved relationships between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians.

CHAPTER TEN

DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS

In this chapter, I discuss participants' experiences of building and strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. This chapter illuminates the following theme, which is one of the central characteristics of participants' experience of conflict transformation:

> **Conflict transformation involves developing relationships through:**
>
> - **Respectful approach**
> - **Recognising and honouring differences**
> - **Recognising and honouring commonalities**

Participants' experience of building relationships as an integral part of conflict transformation is characterised by a complex web of interconnections of respectfully acknowledging both commonalities and differences. Participants' experiences as reflected in this theme share many similarities with Indigenist methodologies, which emphasise the role of relationship within consensual conflict processing. Likewise, Western conflict transformation scholars Lederach (1997) and Bush and Folger (1994) stress the integral role of relationship building within conflict transformation. In contrast, Western scholars of problem solving approaches describe interpersonal relationship building as interfering with the process of conflict resolution (Avruch 1998).

In the first section of this chapter I explore respectful approaches which participants employ in building relationships between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. I then discuss participants' experience of strengthening relationships through acknowledging commonalities. In the third section I explore participants' experiences of strengthening relationships through acknowledging difference. In the final section I address the implications which this theme has for the discipline of conflict studies.

Respectful Approaches to Developing Relationships

Participants maintain that relationships between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians have been affected by colonisation, and that there are effective ways of developing and strengthening relationships between members of the two groups. In the following subsections, I discuss respectful approaches to developing relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians which include: the importance of personal contact, displaying ethical motives for developing relationships, and demonstrating long term commitment to cooperative social change. Respectful approach acknowledges the complexities of colonisation, sustaining relationships through increased self-knowledge, engaging in respectful dialogue, devoting sufficient time to develop relationships, and willingness to change. Furthermore, in sustainable conflict transformation, developing relationships is characterised by holistic process rather than isolated technique.

Many non-Indigenous Australians avoid direct personal contact with Aboriginal Australians either because they think it unnecessary or because they do not know how to do so respectfully. In contrast, the participants in this research describe respectful approaches to developing relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Respectful Approaches to Developing Relationships: The Importance of Personal Contact

Participants explain that the primary way of respectfully approaching a person of another culture is to consider them as another complex human being, not as a stereotypical member of a cultural group. They also maintain that personal contact is necessary to begin to appreciate the reality of each other's experience. In the following quote, an Aboriginal participant describes the importance of personal dialogue in developing relationships with Aboriginal Australians. She describes the way she responds to requests regarding respectful ways of approaching Aboriginal Australians.

> *It is simple, but so, so true. You approach them on the basis that: Okay, here is another human being. They might be different, don't be put off by it or scared. Go up and talk to them... We can sense when people are being patronising to us, or scared of us or are trying to use us (Participant interview 5.12).*

Participants explain that the majority of non-Indigenous Australians have never met nor spoken directly with an Aboriginal Australian. Nevertheless, the Australian media features daily debate regarding relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Unfortunately, a great deal of this debate occurs in isolation from the voices of Aboriginal Australians (Brady 1994). Participants maintain that genuine dialogue requires a personal encounter between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. In the following interview selection, one of the non-Indigenous participants shares his experience of the importance of direct personal contact between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians.

> *The most basic action is getting to know Aboriginal people. Most Australians don't know any. Try to meet them, speak with them, understand them and yes, you'll find how much you can learn from them (Participant interview 4.19).*

Personal contact between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians reduces alienation based on stereotypes and misconceptions. In contrast, isolated conceptual analyses of race relations often perpetuate limited understanding of the complexities of relationships in colonised societies. In the following interview quotation, one of the Aboriginal participants describes the ways in which the lack of personal contact perpetuates stereotyping and alienation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, thus hindering the processes of conflict transformation.

> *One of the major issues that reconciliation has to turn around is this distance. Take any crowd, pull out a hundred White Australians or non-Indigenous Australians and ask how many of them have actually met and talked to an Aboriginal person for any length of time. I think you would be shocked at how many haven't done that. Yet there is this great opinion about Aboriginal Australia, fired up by the media. It's in every newspaper, it's on almost every news bulletin that you may wish to think of. I think there wouldn't be a day goes past without news that has something to do with Aboriginal Australia, and so it should be because there's a number of many issues going on. People read it, and they form opinions. One important point, I think, about the process of reconciliation is to read a book called Being Whitefella. It's about prominent White Australians, including very supportive, senior ministers of Aboriginal Affairs, for instance, senior people. You read about their virtually non-existent knowledge about Aborigines (Participant interview 1.21).*

Direct, face to face dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians alters many misconceptions that are perpetuated in dominant discourse. In the following interview selection, an Aboriginal participant describes her experience of the effect of personal dialogue on discourse regarding Aboriginal Australians. Describing participants' responses in the conflict transformation workshops which she facilitates, she states that:

I find that there are myths and stereotypes about Aboriginal people that are repeated so often, they begin to seem like the truth to the people that say them.
There's a whole new dimension,
A new way of thinking
Once I finish
And once I show them this history
And why we are
Where we are today.
Racism happens everyday of your life.
It deals with the colour of your skin,
More than anything, you know?
And most of them try
To come to terms with it
By defending what's happened.
And as the day goes on,
When you show them about
The stolen generation
And deaths in custody,
At the end of the day
All they want to do is say,
How can we help?
What can we do?
(Participant interview 2.4-2.5).

Participants maintain that personal encounters have the potential to alter inaccurate beliefs regarding those with whom one is in conflict. In the following interview segment, an Aboriginal participant describes her experience of the importance of personal encounters in transforming conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. She maintains that racist behaviours are often diminished through the personal contact that occurs within reconciliation programs involving Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

> *In order for us to know reconciliation at heart, we have to form alliances and friendships with people to break down some of the barriers. We got to know each other as people first and that humanness, and then we formed friendships. I think if Whitefellas in this country have the opportunity to do that, they would see Aboriginal people through very different eyes. It would debase all the stereotypes and prejudices that abound about my people (Participant interview 5.9).*

In addition to personal contact, respectful approaches to building relationships within conflict transformation involve ethical motives. People who are attempting to develop relationships must be willing to engage with the long term, complex processes involved in transforming conflict in colonised societies.

Respectful Approaches to Developing Relationships: Displaying Ethical Motives in Building Relationships

A respectful approach to developing relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples involves self-awareness of one's own motives in developing those relationships. Participants describe beneficial experiences in conflict transformation as those in which the people involved desire a meaningful rather than manipulative relationship. In the following interview segment, one of the Aboriginal participants shares her experience of non-Indigenous Australians seeking respectful dialogical relationship.

> *There are others who are really interested in some of the implications of the ideas or values that Aboriginal people hold in general. It is much deeper than they thought. So they really want to enter into a more open respectful kind of talk about these things: what social values there are, how societies are changing, how their own society is changing. They're actually looking for answers and the opportunity to listen and learn, meet Aboriginal people, talk with Aboriginal people (Participant interview 9.9).*

In contrast, participants find that some people seek to develop relationships because they will gain from the process either professionally, personally or financially. In the following interview segment, one of the Aboriginal participants shares her experience of non-Indigenous people becoming involved in relationships with Aboriginal Australians solely to benefit from compliance with legal requirements:

> *...my ideas and understanding around human social justice positions were driven from that place of: 'Oh, they're there for me'. And that's bullshit. They're not there for you. They're there to implement or to insure... that levels of compliance have been added... under a legal model. That's it. They're not there for your touch, to make you feel good, they're not for that at all, and that was a huge shock... to me, to realise that I was developing relationships from my perspective of: you develop relationships because you care and because they are important. To seeing that: no, some people don't care. Some people do it because they... just don't want to get caught up, they don't want to be blamed or be in a legal battle about something. That's why they are compliant. They're not compliant because... they see the humanness in you or your people. It's got nothing to do with humanness. And for my people to get a grasp that there's a lot of people out there who don't care about our humanness, who don't care about our connection to land, our connection to the human beings that are custodians of that land, and our connection to the landscape, the trees and the animals that are connected to them. That they are equally important as the human beings that are connected to that land is (laughs) totally beyond any sense of understanding (Participant interview 14.5-14.6).*

Participants describe relationships of honourable intent as those in which people are willing to acknowledge their involvement in the processes of colonisation. Ethical intent is also characterised by a commitment to transform one's own self awareness of their role in colonisation and to participate in addressing related systemic social issues. In the following interview segment, one of the Aboriginal participants shares her experience of ethical intent in regard to building relationships with Aboriginal people:

> *People have been quite transformed by the process, that probably never knew anything about Indigenous peoples before but have made an effort to find out and educate themselves about the issues of Indigenous culture and histories and then they've gone out and spread the words themselves, which I find very, very gratifying and very intriguing that they've changed themselves and transformed themselves and they've become the new educators. It's people who are very balanced and able to take that on a bit further that I encourage and I will encourage their friendships and support their efforts (Participant interview 5.14).*

Unethical approaches to building relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians are often based on objectification of Indigenous people. Indigenous Australians are often excluded from political dialogue and considered as 'the Aboriginal problem,' rather than as human beings participating equally in the debate about social change. In conflict transformation, relationships are diminished through approaches that objectify people. In the following interview quote, one of the Aboriginal participants shares the ways in which relationship development is hindered by dialogue that objectifies Aboriginal Australians:

> *I haven't taken them on to develop really deep sort of relationships or friendships. The politicos or the intelligentsia, it's almost like an acknowledgement. They are always around, so you are in touch with them, but I never really developed any deeper relationship than that. I'm sort of reluctant to because I've always had a wariness about getting to the point where Aboriginal content is a subject for dinner party conversation. It's good to talk to intelligentsia, but that's what they often do, is use it as a talking across the dinner table. I just always feel it sets up too many kind of contradictory things for me. I am Aboriginal, we are Indigenous people, and we're talking about it as object. So it gets all blurred and I get a bit uncomfortable when it gets blurred like that, keeps jumping from subject to object (Participant interview 9.19).*

In conflict transformation, honourable intent involves ethical decisions regarding knowledge management. Through processes of conflict transformation, non-Indigenous participants often acquire a great deal of knowledge regarding Aboriginal Australians. Because significant information regarding Aboriginal experience has previously been silenced, non-Indigenous participants may find

themselves possessing expertise valued by the wider community. In the following interview quotation, one of the non-Indigenous participants describes the ways in which non-Indigenous people are often perceived as unethical when they benefit from expertise regarding Aboriginal Australians without sharing those benefits with the Aboriginal community:

> *A lot of people accumulate that expertise and then go on and become consultants, bureaucrats. That's what I mean by maturity. You gain a much stronger analysis of why Indigenous people put those barriers up... People are used to White people coming into their communities and doing research, setting up community projects and leaving. So there's a deep mistrust. I think the analysis becomes critical, your own analysis of those issues, your capacity therefore to absorb the raw anger and understand it within a framework, clarifying your own set of values because that 'call not to exploit' is pretty challenging. Because you do accumulate experience and expertise and people will pay money for that (Participant interview 12.20).*

In addition to ethical decisions regarding use of knowledge, many participants struggle with ethical choices regarding the intensity and closeness of relationships they choose to develop between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. In the following interview segment, one of the non-Indigenous participants describes his struggle regarding the ways in which he approaches relationships with Aboriginal Australians:

> *You are dealing with all those things in yourself, clarifying your own values. How am I going to immerse myself in this? Am I going to stay on the edge? Really difficult questions, particularly when you engage with any marginalised group. How much do you invite people into your home, how much do you get into their world? (Participant interview 12.20).*

In conflict transformation, ethical intent also involves commitment to social change. Participants maintain that relationships are formed not in isolation, but in conjunction with cooperative social action. In the following subsection, I explore participants' experiences of the connections between relationship and positive social change.

Respectful Approaches to Developing Relationships: Long Term Commitment to Co-operative Social Change

Participants maintain that respectful approach in building relationships involves commitment to the processes of co-operative social change. In the following interview selection, a non-Indigenous participant describes the ways in which co-operative social action facilitates the development of relationships between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians.

> *Then that Daniel York case, which I told you was the death of a young boy in West End and it was a Deaths in Custody issue. There was a huge march in Brisbane, the biggest march I've ever seen, a silent march that was very powerful. It was like an invitation from Aboriginal people to stand with them that made it a lot easier. We met a whole heap of Aboriginal people who weren't so angry, who were some of the emerging leadership in that community that said, 'Stand with us.' That made it a whole heap easier (Participant interview 12.18).*

Respectful approaches of developing relationships involve Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians planning and implementing co-operative social action. In the following interview quotation, a non-Indigenous participant describes the ways in which relationships between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians are strengthened through participation in positive social change:

> *Our reconciliation network has been relationship building as well as credibility building. It is good because Aboriginal community members think, 'That reconciliation group, they've done some good stuff. They're an okay mob. You go and see them and they will help you.' It's both as individuals and as groups and organisations that we can effect change. I think this has to do with the relationships within our community at a much deeper level. It is not just to do with the reconciliation group, it is to do with the concept of community. I think there's a sense within the Indigenous community that there is a network of White individuals who think in certain ways and can be approached and will work. Building those relationships between individuals has been really valuable. It has been quite a positive force (Participant interview 7.17-7.19).*

Participants maintain that honourable intent in building relationships involves long term commitment to participate in positive social change. In the following interview segment, one of the Aboriginal participants shares her experience of the connection between social change and honourable intent in forming relationships:

> *Some people are quite quiet about their intentions, quite quietly determined to bring about some kind of change in their own sphere to do with Aboriginal stuff. They will be interested in establishing or working towards making some kind of actual change in society. I always feel a bit more comfortable with those sort of people. But people who are quite practical and want to make some really lasting change, I've always felt much more comfortable with them. They're quite good relationships. I don't see them all the time, but when we do meet, they're really good solid equal relationships, a sense of equality. They're not tagging around. They don't need you (Participant interview 9.21).*

In conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, relationships involve powerful commitments to participate in social change. In the following interview quotation, one of the Aboriginal participants describes the connections between personal relationships and social change. For decades, the two women she is speaking of, one Aboriginal and one non-Indigenous, were pivotal in

developing and supporting political and educational movements for Aboriginal peoples:

> *I became to be involved in reconciliation from a very early age, subconsciously. I know it was through my mother, because she was a person who was a great reconciliationist, along with Muriel Langford and other people who were great influences in my life. I saw these two women and other women using their friendships to activate the process of reconciliation, not only for themselves, but for the Aboriginal community as a whole. I guess a lot of that has rubbed off on me, because I think in order for us to know reconciliation at heart, we have to form alliances and friendships with people to break down some of the barriers (Participant interview 5.3).*

In conflict transformation, respectful approach to building relationship includes willingness to change one's own behaviour in response to increased understanding. In the following interview quotation, one of the Aboriginal participants describes respectful approach as a process of willingness to listen to others and to make the corresponding changes required to transform conflict:

> *It's the journey that will never end. It has a lot of beginnings. We'll always continue. I believe the process will never end in our country. The message is so simple about reconciliation. It's about having respect for each other. It's definitely a two way street. I know that some of our own people don't get that yet. It's for us to give an inch too, back the other way (Participant interview 5.44).*

Respectful Approaches to Developing Relationships: Acknowledging Complexities of Colonisation

In conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, respectful approaches to building relationships include acknowledgement of the complexities of colonisation. For example, conflicts exist between Aboriginal groups who were removed from their traditional lands and placed into communities and reserves with rival groups (Beattie 1997; Grose 1995). Therefore, issues of power and group affiliation greatly affect relationships. Often non-Indigenous participants find that if they build relationships with a particular group of Aboriginal Australians, they may become alienated from other, rival groups of Aborigines. In the following interview segments, two of the non-Indigenous participants describe the importance of acknowledging the impact of colonisation on relationships:

> *Once it became a more conscious thing: we need to start really building relations, people discovered that they were quite marginalised from a whole range of other Indigenous groups. It is such an area of conflict you don't even know if you make a start where that is going to land you. Then if you do make*

relationships, you talk to this person and they say, 'Yeah, you're relating to this person. They're such and such a tribe, they don't really come from this community. This is not their original land.' So you get confused (Participant interview 12.11-12.12).

You've got to see and appreciate that there are other people's positions and where they come from and their sensitivities to things. Be aware of underlying conflicts and how they might affect the present situation. You have links with your birth group and your place of home and work and religion. Those sorts of things are connections and I think they really affect the way you are going to make a decision or what side of a conflict you might lean towards or how you might resolve a particular instance (Participant interview 6.14).

Respectful approaches to building relationships between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians acknowledge the challenges of dealing with unequal power in relationships. In colonised societies, many factors discourage relationships of equality. For example, Indigenous Australians may consider individuals and organisations from the politically dominant group to be adversaries. In the following interview excerpt, one of the Aboriginal participants describes the challenges she experienced when deciding to work with non-Indigenous Australians:

To work within the system might provide opportunities to influence policy makers and strategists, but to join the public service might be viewed as a rejection of Aboriginal values and aspirations. To us, the government had been the enemy.
Before accepting the position,
I went and talked to people,
Some of the old people in that place
Where I was living.
And I said, 'What do I do?'
And they pointed out
How it was important to go inside
To find out how these places worked.
We needed some people on the inside
And some people on the outside.
If we could work together
Things might be able to be achieved.
It was on that basis that I went in.
(Participant interview 3.3-3.4).

Respectful approaches to building relationships involve awareness of one's own involvement in the processes of colonisation. Non-Indigenous participants experience the necessity of acknowledging the ways in which their relationships are impacted by Australians' historical and current experiences of colonisation. In the following interview quotation, one of the non-Indigenous participants describes the

necessity of acknowledging and responding to the impact of colonisation upon relationships between non-Indigenous and Aboriginal Australians.

> *It's an Indigenous people there. There are different mobs within that. Those connections are really, really powerful. To become trusted within that, given the history of what's gone on and the persecution that has happened by people with bad intentions and the mistakes by people of good intentions, is very difficult. There's always questions of difference and how you are going to relate to each other. You've got to take into account historical and cultural factors. They're very powerful in a land where there's a group that's been oppressed and their history stares starkly at them all the time. To become accepted or respected, you've got to be really careful about what you do and say, not just step right in and make assumptions (Participant interview 6.5).*

In the processes of conflict transformation, respectful approach to relationship involves developing deeper understanding of one's self. In conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, lack of self-knowledge, particularly in regard to one's role in colonisation, hinders relationship building. Participants maintain that respectful relationships are facilitated when participants increase awareness of their own experiences of colonisation. In the following quotation, an Aboriginal participant describes the necessity of increasing awareness of the ways in which colonisation has affected all Australians and therefore the relationships between them.

> *I guess that's what I always found very frustrating about the teaching process at the university was trying to get students to look at themselves and how they have been affected by colonialism. They found it very hard to look in the mirror and say, 'I'm part of what has happened here and I need to look at myself, I need to own my own history in this country in order to be able to live here in harmony with the Indigenous population' (Participant interview 13.13).*

Respectful approaches to building relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians involve 'singing up' aspects of human experience that have largely been silenced in dominant discourse. In addition to increasing awareness of one's own role in colonisation, participants also experience the necessity of increasing awareness of their own spirituality. Indeed, many of the participants maintain that increased self-knowledge in regard to spirituality is a prerequisite to building meaningful relationships. In the following interview segments, participants describe the connections between knowledge of one's spirituality and relationship. The first quote is from an Aboriginal participant, the second from a non-Indigenous participant.

> *We equate a spiritual life, the acceptance of it, as a mark of maturity. Australians don't know themselves very well. The very first step in trying to establish a really good relationship with 'the other' is to have full knowledge of yourself first. You might say that you also acquire full knowledge of yourself reflected in relationship with somebody else. But collective self -knowledge has to start somewhere. Australians never give it a go. They think all there is to know is what they already know. Any kind of comment that sounds like a critique, they take as a criticism. It's very difficult to form a mature relationship like Murris would want. The other person has to be mature enough to want that relationship on a deeper level, not on a shallow transparent, products of culture level, but on a much deeper philosophical, soul level. In order to do that, they have to have some kind of self-knowledge. To me, to most Murris, there isn't any there. We don't see it. I don't see it (Participant interview 9.30).*

> *When talking about reconciliation, and about self-knowing, I think a part of it for me is that spiritual stuff of finding out who you are (Participant interview 7.22).*

Respectful Approaches to Developing Relationships: Devoting Sufficient Time to Develop Relationships

Building relationships between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians requires a great deal of time. Participants maintain that respectful approaches to developing relationships involve long-term commitment to the process. Indeed, participants speak of taking many years to build relationships of significance. These measures of time more closely reflect those of Indigenist conflict processing and Western conflict transformation which also incorporated expanded time frames. In the following interview quotation, a non-Indigenous participant describes her experience of the length of time required to develop relationships with Indigenous Australians. For several years she has worked full time in a reconciliation program with Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

> *I would say that for me to have an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island culture, I would need to spend more time doing that. For me to say I have a relationship with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples is premature and does not encompass all of my life. I'm very new in working with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples and hopefully this work will enable me to build strong, close personal friendships with some people from those communities. The longer I work in this position, the more credibility I have. It's kind of like: you're still around, you must be okay. They start opening up a bit more. If I were around for another couple of years, well that would be fine, I would have no problems at all. These people would remember and they would open up even more (Participant interview 11.31).*

Participants maintain that long term commitment facilitates more meaningful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Working within

extensive time frames, participants also find opportunities to participate in increasingly meaningful processes of social change. In the following interview selection, a non-Indigenous Australian shares his experience of developing a significant relationship with an Aboriginal family through long term commitment to social change.

> *The particular Aboriginal family that I worked with was an urban family, the younger people were. The older people had been brought up on a mission. I got to meet them through friends and it was over sort of a long period of time that I gained a more intimate connection with them, through friends and through living out in the country and then visiting them. So that was how that relationship built up, getting to the point where we made a short documentary at a place out West of here. It is the eldest woman's grandmother's country and is a doco about taking her children and grandchildren back to her grandmother's place. I spent quite a bit of time out there in the bush with them, so that connection solidified. One of the young boys in the family died in custody and they asked us to come and film the funeral (Participant interview 6.3).*

Respectful Approach to Developing Relationships: Holistic Process

In conflict transformation, respectful approach is a holistic process, not an isolated technique implemented in order to manipulate relationships. Participants describe their experience of transforming conflict through transforming one's attitude toward others. In the following interview segment, one of the Aboriginal participants describes his experience of respect as a *process* which he integrates into his being. He warns against using relationship building as a technique implemented solely to influence others:

> *I make every possible attempt to interact with the person. I don't talk to the Dean of the faculty, I talk to the person. If you approach these issues from the point of view that there is good in everyone and given the opportunity and the right circumstances, people would be prepared to show that good side. Respect has got to be there, trust has got to be there. You have to respect people when they're with you and when they're not with you. When you're talking about people, you don't lose that respectful way of speaking. It's not something that you can switch on and switch off. You have to continue to practise it. That can go, in my view, into prayer, whatever prayer means to people. Prayer in my view of it is very much a part of my life. I include people who are colleagues, as part of my prayer at the time. My close family comes through in every prayer, but close friends are also close in prayer. That way you build up a persona of respect, a persona of humility, not a persona that is easily manipulated. I'm talking about a persona that is respectful. I think people respond to it (Participant interview 1.13).*

Summary

In the participants' experience of conflict transformation, respectful approaches to developing relationships are characterised by intense, complex interactions that acknowledge respectful ways of approaching relationships. These approaches represent a holistic process that acknowledges the complex effects that colonisation has had on the formation of relationships between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians.

Developing Relationships: Acknowledging Commonalities

In conflict transformation, relationships are facilitated through awareness of the common ground of human experience that underlies cultural difference. These commonalities include common problems, shared human needs and common strengths and weaknesses. Participants in conflict transformation emphasise the importance of approaching others first as human beings, then secondly as members of a particular group. In the following interview selection, one of the non-Indigenous participants describes his experience of building relationships through identifying common ground with Indigenous Australians:

> *A search for identity and resolution of cultural conflict requires a real dialogue – one which includes a search for our shared values and spiritual roots, a genuine openness, the will to understand each other, and the ability to step beyond the confines of our own habits and prejudices. I think if we see each other as primarily human as Joseph Campbell said, 'The main problem I see is which group you identify with. You identify with your own group or as a member of the whole lot?' We get down to what sorts of truths people can actually link to (Participant interview 6.17-6.18).*

Acknowledging commonalities among Aboriginal and non-Indigenous participants involves more than recognition of common strengths and values. Acknowledging common problems strengthens relationships by moving away from the benefactor/victim roles that characterise many relationships between non-Indigenous and Aboriginal Australians (Holt 2000). In the following interview quotation, one of the non-Indigenous participants shares a story in which awareness of common problems developed closer relationships between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians.

> *So that was actually the beginning of quite an interesting interaction with the folks in the hostel. Pretty scary environment, the original hostel, lot of violence, lot of shouting and broken windows. One incident I am sure I will always remember. This one day some woman that had been living with us who*

had a lot of problems with domestic violence, her husband discovered finally she was living at our place and he came at our door with an axe. Fortunately we had a back door and front door and literally there was a chase scene around the house and all the Murri people were sitting on the wall of the hostel across the road, laughing and saying, 'It's so good to see Whitefellas chasing each other around the house. We're so used to other people watching us chase each other around the house.'

We built relationships with a lot of those people. We weren't any different, we had a lot of problems, especially when working with marginalised White people as well (Participant interview 12.7).

Participants maintain that relationships are also strengthened by acknowledging shared human needs. People of all cultures experience a desire to have their needs recognised, although they may have quite different ways of meeting those needs (Galtung 1990). Participants experience strengthened relationships when they acknowledge and honour the common human needs that underlie cultural difference. In the following interview quotation, one of the Aboriginal participants describes the importance of acknowledging shared human needs for respect and acceptance:

In the very limited exposure that I have had to the formal processes, it seems to me that there needs to be more attention paid to it being a two way street. It's not something that should be narrowed and confined to a reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, it's something that: to embrace the principle of being prepared to understand and appreciate all peoples, we talk about Aboriginal people and we talk about non-Aboriginal people. Both groups are so diverse that you can't be operating in just a little two terminal kind of way. In each of those terminals, (if you want to use that analogy), there is a multitude of differences. My view is that if you apply the people principle to any process, you're starting on a better footing. Everyone has an ego and everyone has a right to be treated fairly, treated as a human being, as a person with dignity, as a person who is good. I think even the most outrageously aggressive person is crying out somewhere deep inside to have someone say to them, 'I'm a good person.' They may have committed horrendous crimes. They might on the surface say, 'Well, right buddy, that is the way it is.' I still hold faith that there is that good in people inside (Participant interview 1.15).

In conflict transformation, participants emphasise the importance of recognising people's problems and faults as well as their good traits. Participant's experience strengthened relationships through a balanced awareness of others' attributes. In the following interview quotation, an Indigenous participant describes part of her approach to building relationships, emphasising the importance of acknowledging both individuals' strengths and weaknesses:

Everyone has some good.
Sometimes you've got to dig

For it, really, to find it
But you can find it usually.
Focus on that.
Try and develop that.
Develop that so that comes out
And overwhelms all the flaws
They have in their characters.
No one is all bad.
Find their strengths,
Know their faults, their flaws.
(Participant interview 3.16).

Developing Relationships: Acknowledging Differences

In developing relationships within the processes of conflict transformation, participants emphasise the importance of acknowledging differences. As discussed in previous chapters, Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians experience differences in worldview as well as in experiences of colonisation. These differences impact upon the processes of conflict transformation and as such must be acknowledged and accommodated.

Differences in worldview impact upon the ways in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians approach each other. To Indigenous Australians, respectful approach involves coming to know another person in ways that recognise the interconnections between family, community and land. When introducing themselves, for example, Indigenous Australians speak of family, clan identity and connection with land. However, this process contrasts with the ways in which many non-Indigenous Australians introduce themselves. In non-Indigenous introductions, training and occupation are usually the primary aspects. To many Westerners these may appear to be minor differences in cultural etiquette (Avruch & Black 1991). However, the differences between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australian styles of introduction represent significant differences in worldview. In the following interview segment, one of the Aboriginal participants describes the differences in worldview that impact upon introductory approaches between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians:

> *I think that it's very interesting when we talk about ourselves as Aboriginal people, we state our clan groups and tribal affiliations. Then we speak about where we live, our families. And what we do last is status (in terms of occupation). Some of the non-Indigenous people make no reference to their families and say their status first. It's such a different introductory stance (Participant interview 5.5).*

Participants in conflict transformation emphasise the importance of acknowledging differences in worldview when building relationships. In Aboriginal Australian worldview, relationship extends beyond other human beings to include the earth and other natural elements. Therefore, relationship with land is an aspect of worldview that impacts upon conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. In the following interview segment, one of the Indigenous participants describes the connections between land and relationship that impact upon Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australian relationships:

> *Murris don't expect other people to become Murris. I think what Murris are asking is that people recognise the humanness of all people, and that there be a respect there for different cultural beliefs. Murris don't want to change Whites into Murris. The expectation is that Whites will develop the same sort of spiritual and emotional ties with land that Murris have and that they will take on the same responsibilities for caring for land and custodianship for land that Murris have. That should become part of their consciousness as it has for Murris. How Whites get there I think is a slow process. But they'd get there faster if there were good will and a willingness to learn from the Indigenous population (Participant interview 13.22).*

Summary

In conflict transformation, relationship building is facilitated through approaching others respectfully, as well as by recognising and honouring differences and commonalities. Participants experience respectful approaches as incorporating: ethical motives; significant commitment to positive social change; and acknowledging others as fellow humans. Participants also emphasise the importance of acknowledging the complexities of colonisation and increasing one's self-knowledge of their own involvement in the processes of colonisation. Participants describe respectful approaches as including mutual dialogue as well as the willingness to change in response to increased understanding that develops from that dialogue. Furthermore, respectful approach to relationship involves a commitment to devoting sufficient time to support processes of conflict transformation. In the following section, I discuss the ways in which participants' experience of developing relationships informs the discipline of conflict studies.

Developing Relationships and Conflict Studies

The findings discussed in this chapter have the potential to inform the discipline of conflict studies. These findings indicate the importance of building relationships

between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians as an integral part of transforming conflict. These relationship building processes incorporate respectful approaches that acknowledge both differences and commonalities.

Participants' experience of conflict transformation is similar to Indigenous peacemaking and consensual conflict processing, in which reducing alienation and restoring relationships are primary goals. In the Indigenous worldviews explored in this thesis, humans are selves embedded in relationship with other humans, spirits and the natural world (Shook & Kwan 1987, pp. 9-10). Therefore, one of the major goals of processing conflict must be the restoration of balance and harmony in relationships (Awiakta 1993; Garrett 1998; Shook & Kwan 1987; Yazzie 1995).

Likewise, Western practices of transforming conflict emphasise the importance of strengthening relationships between those involved in conflict (Burgess & Burgess 1996; Bush & Folger 1994; Umbreit 1997). John Paul Lederach (1997, p. 26) names relationship building as the focal point for transforming protracted conflict in deeply divided societies. He describes this process as a paradigm shift 'away from a concern with the resolution of issues and toward a frame of reference that focuses on the restoration and rebuilding of relationships' (Lederach 1997, p. 24).

In contrast to the findings discussed in this chapter, the dominant models of Western conflict resolution fail to address building and strengthening interpersonal relationships (Bush & Folger 1994). In problem solving models, relationships may be maintained or improved to a certain extent in that such approaches are less adversarial than adjudication or arbitration, and thus less damaging to existing relationships (Fisher & Ury 1981). However the major goal of problem solving models remains the satisfaction of individual interests, not the development of harmonious relationships (Avruch 1998; Bush & Folger 1994).

The findings discussed in this chapter suggest that relationship building is of primary importance in the processes of transforming conflict. Participants' experience therefore supports the theoretical framework of Indigenist consensual conflict processing and Western conflict transformation. Participants' experience suggests privileging problem solving over relationship would not provide the long-term changes that are needed to sustain conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians.

Conclusion

Participants' experiences illuminate the central importance of relationships in the processes of conflict transformation. Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants experience a development and strengthening of relationship through respectful approaches that both recognise and honour commonalities and weaknesses. As discussed this far, the processes of conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians include interconnected aspects of developing deep understanding, recognising and utilising the power of emotions and developing relationships. In the next chapter, I elaborate upon another related theme which addresses Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians working together to implement positive social change.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPLEMENT SOCIAL CHANGE

> In many cases there are real friendships, associations, marriages, and family and sporting ties between Aboriginal people and other Australians. Let us start at this positive base and work out a better and just Australia. Positive attitudes can be inculcated...to relate to Aboriginal people not as inferiors, not as superiors, not as patronisers, but as equals (Egan 1994, pp. 76-77).

In the previous chapter, I illuminated participants' experiences of developing relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. As illustrated in the above quotation, meaningful relationships facilitate working together to implement long term social change. In this chapter, I illuminate participants' experiences of working together on projects that build an infrastructure supporting sustainable conflict transformation. This theme is one of the central aspects of participants' experience in transforming conflict:

Conflict transformation includes

- **working together as equals**
- **implementing positive social change at personal levels**
- **implementing positive social change at systems levels.**

The central characteristics of participants' experiences in working together are comparable to those of Indigenous conflict processing and Western processes of transforming conflict. As discussed in Chapter Two, Indigenous conflict processing is designed to address the underlying causes of conflict, develop harmonious relations, involve a wide range of participants, and implement long term change. As discussed in Chapter Four, Western scholars of sustainable conflict transformation stress similar processes. For instance, according to Lederach (1997, p. 83), sustainable conflict transformation involves:

- addressing the systemic roots of conflict
- developing infrastructures to minimise violence
- maximising participation of those involved in the conflict
- promoting nonviolent mechanisms that reduce adversariness.

In the first section of this chapter I illuminate Aboriginal and non-Indigenous participants' experience of working together to facilitate projects of social change that sustain conflict transformation. In the second and third sections I elaborate upon participants' experiences in implementing positive social change at personal and systems levels. In the final section I discuss the implications of this theme in regard to the discipline of conflict studies.

Working together as Equals to Implement Positive Social Change

Sustainable conflict transformation involves Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians working together on projects that are designed to implement long term social change. Lederach (1997, p. xvi) maintains that 'sustainable conflict transformation involves the establishment of an infrastructure across levels of society that involves multiple actors and activities.' Some of the changes required to sustain conflict transformation take place in the personal sphere of experience. Other changes are required at systems levels. Participants in conflict transformation in Australia experience the necessity of working together to establish an infrastructure of education, training and co-operative projects that sustain conflict transformation over decades and generations.

In the following sections, I discuss the ways in which participants work together to build infrastructures that reduce adversarial relations between those involved, develop infrastructures to minimise violence, address the systemic roots of conflict, and maximise the participation of those involved in the conflict.

Processes That Reduce Adversarial Relations

Participants emphasise the importance of working together to promote processes that reduce adversarial relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. They maintain that racism is one of the major issues that must be addressed to reduce alienation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Participants experience a decrease in racism through participating in group projects designed to improve relationships and create on-going structures of positive social interaction. In the following interview quotation, a non-Indigenous

participant describes cooperative community projects that reduce adversarial relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. This participant regularly facilitates programs such as the ones described in the following poem.

One of the things we've thought of
Is festivals, multicultural festivals
And reconciliation built into them.
You get whole towns working together
For a year.

All kinds of people,
All kinds of backgrounds,
All kinds of occupations.

And then comes the day
On which the festival happens
And they celebrate.

Now people who have done that
Find it very difficult to hate each other.

(Participant interview 4.18).

Group efforts to effect positive social change are facilitated through respectful approaches that frame the conflict between selves-in-relationship rather than between opposing adversaries. As explained in Chapter Eight, respectful dialogue increases the commitment of the people involved in transforming the conflict. In the following interview quotation, one of the Aboriginal participants describes a process of respectful dialogue that reduces adversarial relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. He describes facilitation of land use agreements through dialogical processes that evoke relationship:

> *I was fortunate to grow up at a time when everyone knew what we were on about at a very fundamental level. We were able to hunt all over the land of our neighbours and people knew that there was no fear of loss of stock through irresponsible use of firearms or cutting of fences, or of leaving open of gates. I think those sorts of relationships can still be developed. There are people out there, who, if you sit down and you treat them like people and say, 'You've got a pastoral lease here, that's where my old granny was. I would like to access that, it is important to me and to my life, my people, and my family's life.' I'm sure with that kind of approach, you'll have an arrangement where people will say you can come in, but it will have to be on a controlled basis (Participant interview 1.43).*

Developing an Infrastructure to Minimise Violence

Visioning, or developing a vision of a shared future (Boulding 1995), is an integral part of building infrastructures that support conflict transformation (Lederach 1997, pp. 76-79). Participants explain that if they are to move forward together, they must develop a shared vision of where they are headed. Vision regarding a shared future both propels and sustains positive social change.

Participants emphasise the importance of sharing visions that sustain hope and therefore encourage efforts toward long term social change. In the following interview quotation, one of the Aboriginal participants shares the vision that sustains the reconciliation movement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. She articulates a shared vision of processes which are beneficial to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians:

> *With reconciliation audiences, they want to hear the positives. We hear too many negatives. People have come up to me after the end of talks and they've said, 'Thank you for giving us hope and being positive about it.' You've got to give people that optimism that's got to carry through.*
>
> *While I'm*
> *Living,*
> *Breathing,*
> *Eating,*
> *And sleeping,*
> *I'll always be part*
> *Of that reconciliation process*
> *That is trying to do something*
> *For everyone in this country.*
> *(Participant interview 5.20, 5.24).*

As explained in the previous two sections, sustainable conflict transformation incorporates shared visions of non-adversarial relationships. In the following sections, I illuminate participants' experiences of addressing the systemic roots of conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians.

Addressing the Systemic Roots of Conflict

Participants maintain that the systemic roots of current conflict include the continued dispossession of many Aboriginal lands. In the following excerpt from my research journal, Muriel Langford describes her experience of the relationship between dispossession of traditional Aboriginal lands and current conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

I shared an afternoon with 'Mother' Muriel Langford, one of the pioneers of social justice for Aboriginal Australians. I was seeking her guidance and advice on my research as she is highly regarded in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. She spent hours sharing her experiences with me. At the end of the dialogue, she insisted that transforming conflict between Indigenous and non Indigenous Australians started and ended with gaining back rights to traditional Aboriginal lands. She said, 'You can work on resolving all the conflicts between Aboriginal and White Australians that you want. The truth of the matter is that the Aboriginal people will not consider conflict resolved until they have their land back, no matter how long it takes. Make no mistake, they will keep working at it until it happens' (Research Journal Jan. 1997).

Participants maintain that laws and legislation which restrict Indigenous Australians' ability to access and practice custodianship of traditional lands are contributing factors to ongoing conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. As discussed in Chapter Three, land is of central importance in Aboriginal Australian worldview. Land is an integral part of a web that includes relationships, spirituality and identity. Participants explain that developing sustainable conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians involves projects regarding access to traditional lands. In the following interview quotation, one of the Aboriginal participants describes her experience of effective conflict transformation as addressing custodianship of traditional Aboriginal lands. She describes her experiences of working together with non-Indigenous Australians to develop a land use agreement between her people and the Queensland Government.

A successful example of resolving conflict and reconciling is the Native Title Agreement for Sunset Yulanji. Pastoralists, miners, and Aboriginal people have worked together for three or four years to reach an agreement and now we hold the second Native Title Agreement in Queensland. We will all work together to resolve any problems that come up.

It's having access to our land.
We're just unbelievably happy.
All of us are going to get on.
They have given us access to the Sacred Sites.
(Participant interview 2.26-2.27).

Maximising Participation of those Involved in the Conflict

Participants in conflict transformation maintain the importance of increasing the participation of those involved in the conflict. However, many individuals neglect involvement in conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians because they believe that their efforts will not make a difference.

Participants in this study stress the effectiveness of personal involvement in the processes of sustainable social change. In the following interview quotation one of the non-Indigenous participants describes the importance of personal involvement in the processes of transforming conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. In this quote he is responding to my request for his experience of effective ways that individuals contribute positively to transforming conflict.

> *The first one is for people to monitor media and respond to them as individuals. It seems to me that talkback programs and letters to the editor attract the noisy, destructive minority. They get all the air time in the world because they get up and we don't. We shake our heads and say, 'Oh, you know, terrible!' People think that a good thing will speak for itself, they don't make the effort to bring it up, to get up, to get themselves informed and to express their opinions publicly. Not everybody can be the front person, but the front person can only be effective if there is a group of supporters behind them. Help organise rallies, meetings, conferences, study circles where people have an opportunity in a protected environment to discuss these issues in a civilised way. Attract those people who are not on your side so that people can actually hear their views and debate them (Participant interview 4.16).*

Participants also maximise participation by involving a wide range of community members in projects designed to address immediate concerns. In the following interview quotation, one of the non-Indigenous participants shares her experience of increasing community involvement in reconciliation and conflict transformation. She is describing the ways in which a reconciliation group in which she participates has integrated practical action with their increased knowledge regarding Indigenous history and current experience. They are involved in implementing projects that address the conditions that perpetuate conflict and alienation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians.

> *Our group moved away from the focus on the 8 issues into looking at it (reconciliation) in our local environment. We've had to do a number of things. Recently a member of the community died and the reconciliation group came together with immediate practical stuff: transport and trying to raise money for the funeral home and trying to be supportive. This woman was a fairly important member of the community and had she been a member of the White community there would have been any number of articles about her. We were trying to make this community aware that this had been an important person (Participant interview 7.28).*

Summary

Participants in sustainable conflict transformation experience the effectiveness of working together to implement projects designed to sustain harmonious relationships, develop shared visions, address the underlying roots of conflict, and

maximise participation of community members. In the following section of this chapter, I illuminate participants' experiences of implementing social change through modifying personal expressions of racism.

Implementing Positive Social Change at Personal Levels

Participants maintain that protracted conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is transformed through personal changes in racist attitudes, beliefs and practices. Participants emphasise the importance of developing infrastructures that support training and education regarding anti-racism skills. In the following subsections of this section, I illuminate participants' experiences of reducing adversarial relationships through developing skills which enable them to respond effectively to racism. Furthermore, they experience the importance of developing more comprehensive awareness of Aboriginal experiences of racism.

Promoting Processes that Reduce Adversariness: Effective Personal Response to Racism

Participants maintain that personal response to racism is one of the critical issues that must be addressed in order to reduce adversarial relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Racist speech and behaviour perpetuate and deepen alienation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Programs that teach effective skills of responding to racist discourse are integral parts of the participants' experience in transforming conflict.

Participants express the confusion they feel when they are faced with expressions of racism, but do not have the necessary skills to respond effectively. In the following interview selection a non-Indigenous Australian involved in conflict transformation shares his perplexity over responding appropriately to racist discourse:

> These events tend to ambush the unwary. You get in a cab and the driver apologises for being late. He explains that he's had to argue with a customer. 'You know what these blacks are like,' he says conspiratorially, certain you are on his side.
>
> What do you do? Get out of the cab on some isolated road, express your indignation, threaten to report the conversation then hope an empty taxi will be cruising by and you won't be too late for that

> critical appointment? Or do you keep your mouth shut, substituting silence for action, arguing with your conscience that the driver would have been embarrassed by the mute non-compliance? (Graham 1994, p. 28).

Participants also express discomfort over the times they responded to racism and found their response less effective than they had hoped. In the following story one of the non-Indigenous participants shares her first encounter with racist behaviour in relation to Indigenous Australians. She responded to counteract the racism, but found her approach less effective than she had hoped.

> *My interest in Indigenous people started with my first encounter with racism when I was a teenager in a small country town. There weren't very many Aboriginal people in the community and I didn't have any Aboriginal children ever in my class at school. But when I was a teenager I was in a netball club. A bank manager's wife had an Aboriginal girl working for her. She was wanting to get her into a better job and to be able to mix with girls her own age so that when she left the town, she wouldn't be spending all her life doing housework and looking after other people's children. She asked the coach could the girl join our netball club. If it had been a white girl, the coach would have said, 'Of course, come along.' But she said, 'Oh, well I will speak to the girls about it.' There were some who felt so strongly about it, and the most racist comments came forward. I remember saying, 'But why, what reason? What's wrong with having her play with us?' and somebody saying 'Oh, but they smell different.' Not, no 'They have a smell about them.' Cause I said, 'Yes, I do too when I am perspiring (laughter) after a game'. The coach must have gone back and said there was too much opposition, so she didn't join the club.*
>
> *Also, she wanted to be a nurse and she never became a nurse. There was almost a walkout (by) the nurses there, rather than have her there. And very, very, racist comments came forward again then.*
>
> *Being my first lesson, from then on, I felt that I would always speak out whenever I saw anything like that.*
>
> *I hated racism.*
> *I look back now and feel ashamed*
> *That at times I heard comments*
> *And walked away*
> *(Participant interview 10.3- 10.4).*

Participants maintain that desire alone does not enable them to respond effectively to racist practices. They advocate programs structured to teach anti-racism skills. The previously quoted participant, who shares the story of her first encounter with racism, emphasises the benefits of programs that teach effective responses to racism. She and her friends participated in a series of learning circles, sponsored by Australians for Reconciliation, which featured anti-racism skills as a central component. In the following excerpts from her story she shares the ways in

which the reconciliation program empowered her and her friends with the skills needed to respond effectively to racist discourse.

> *This is what*
> *The reconciliation movement has done.*
> *Those study circles taught us*
> *How to speak out.*
>
> *Lettie and I went up to that meeting up at Morayfield a while ago with Courier Mail and Channel 9. And Lettie stood up and she didn't ask a question so much as make a statement and attacked Ron Brunton and some of his statements and got the loudest applause. She said, 'I'm a 74 year old woman and I didn't know about a lot of things that went on and I've lived to this age before I find out the things.'*
>
> *She hadn't gone there with anything planned to say, but they got her steamed up and so she stood up and of course she can think on her feet and speak out well. That's what she said afterward, 'I wouldn't have been game to stand up and say what I said and I wouldn't have felt knowledgeable enough to have said anything.' So that's what it has done for her (Participant interview 10.4, 10.23).*

Developing Comprehensive Awareness of Aboriginal Experiences of Racism

In developing effective responses to racism, participants emphasise the importance of developing awareness of Indigenous Australians' experience of racism. One cannot respond to situations that remain silenced, out of conscious awareness. Unfortunately, many non-Indigenous Australians who would not deliberately engage in racist behaviour are unaware of the extent of the racism that Indigenous Australians face (Tannoch-Bland 1997). Participants maintain that conflict transformation involves bringing racial injustices into conscious awareness. In the following interview selection, one of the Aboriginal participants shares her experiences of the racist dialogue that she encounters on a regular basis:

> *I find that there are myths and stereotypes about Aboriginal people that are repeated so often, they begin to seem like the truth to the people that say them. I try to teach people what Aboriginal lives are really like, what is important to us, and how we are affected by government policies. I think it is important for people to talk to others when they hear racist remarks and explain how racist language impacts on Aboriginal people.*
>
> *They say*
> *We're all drunks.*
> *We're all lazy.*
> *We don't know how to look after our own families.*
> *We don't know how to look after our homes.*
> *People used to call us*
> *Lazy Abos*
> *Drunken Abos*

Black Abos, you know.
Some people still do
(Participant interview 2.5-2.6).

Participants stress the importance of educating others regarding effective responses to racist discourse. Participants experience the effectiveness of educating their children and grandchildren to respond to racism in ways that reduce adversarial relations. In the following interview selection, one of the Aboriginal participants relates a story of a family outing during which she and her granddaughter encountered racist dialogue. Through learning about reconciliation from her grandmother, the granddaughter was able to make positive responses to racist dialogue.

I took my little granddaughter down
And she was playing in the playground
At McDonalds.
And this little White girl come up and said,
'Is your mummy Black?'
And my little grand-daughter replied,
'No, that's my Nanny!'
And the little White girl said,
'Well, my mummy said
I'm not allowed to speak
To people like your Nanny!'

And my little grand-daughter said:
'But my nanny will speak to you.'
That's where it's got to start.
With the kids.
Education.
(Participant interview 2.23).

Summary

Participants maintain that sustainable conflict transformation involves changes in personal response to racism. They experience the effectiveness of programs and experiences that reduce adversarial relations and build effective skills of responding to racist discourse. In the following section of this chapter, I address the participants' experiences of implementing social change at systems levels.

Implementing Positive Social Change at Systems Levels

As well as personal change, sustainable conflict transformation must address the wider systemic concerns that perpetuate conflict (Lederach 1997, pp. 55-60). Participants in this study emphasise the necessity of addressing systemic racism and

systemic dispossession of traditional Aboriginal lands. In the following sections, I illuminate participants' experiences in combating racism, bringing racism to the surface, understanding the effects of systemic racism on personal experiences of racism, addressing white race privilege, addressing damaged relationships with the earth, and planning for future generations.

Addressing the Systemic Roots of Conflict: Combating Racism

As explained thus far, participants emphasise the necessity of modifying personal expressions of racist behaviour. However, they maintain that decreases in personal expressions of racism alone are not enough to sustain conflict transformation. In addition, such efforts must be supplemented by working to decrease systemic racism. In the following interview segment, a non-Indigenous participant describes his philosophy of combating racism at systems levels. He implements community programs designed to inculcate positive beliefs about Indigenous Australians in an effort to displace racist myths and stereotypes.

> *To me, fighting against racism is natural since I was a child. Standing up for human rights is second nature to me. The principle from which I come is my own survival. I was born in Nazi Germany. My parents lived what is called 'underground'. This means living in hiding or with false names, identity and forged documents. They couldn't have done that without the help of some very courageous people who risked their lives by helping people like us. So when we survived and I grew up, I had to ask myself:*
>
> *Why did I survive?*
> *A million Jewish children died in concentration camps.*
> *My parents and their generation,*
> *Six million of them died.*
> *Why didn't I?*
> *Why did I survive?*
>
> *The only answer I could ever come to is: I would have to do something in my life which goes beyond my own self interest and makes a contribution to such a thing never happening again. I am committed to ensuring that racism has no effect (can be prevented or eliminated if possible) and developing strategies of how that can be achieved.*
>
> *You can fight racism in a negative way: you can stand up and you fight the racists. But a more strategic way is to replace in people's minds racist thoughts with positive thoughts about the diversity of our population.*
>
> *There is a core group of people who will have racial hatred as part of their make-up. There is very little you can do with them. But then there is a wider circle of people who find some arguments used by racists attractive. So the approach is strategic promotion of multiculturalism to replace the negative aspects.*

Reconciliation (between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians) is a very special thing. Non-reconciliation equates with racism. If there are strategies to combat racism, reconciliation has to be part of it (Participant interview 4.1-4.7).

Participants maintain that underlying issues of conflict must be addressed through systems change. They describe educational frameworks that support systems change through the implementation of programs that inculcate anti-racism knowledge and skills. In the following interview quotation, one of the Aboriginal participants shares the importance of educational frameworks that address the systemic roots of conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians.

People I've known in the past who I may have gone to school with that have never realised, because we weren't taught Aboriginal history at school, never realised the past history and have come back into my life now and are able to see that some of the stuff that happened to us at school, and why that happened was because of results of racism or ignorant teachers not understanding.

When you get a million people voting for One Nation, it says that education is really needed. And if we can get to those people really early, and this is what we have been trying to tell the education system, that rather than wait till you get to university to tell them about our history and culture and they're all quite shocked because they never heard of it before. Start doing it while they're little. Start really early for students so they do develop into a mindset themselves. So that's where I think it really has to start – early prevention! (Participant interview5.29-5.30).

Addressing the Systemic Roots of Conflict: Bringing Racism to the Surface

Participants maintain that institutionalised racism perpetuates alienation and disenfranchisement of Aboriginal Australians from mainstream society. However, a great deal of systemic racism remains unacknowledged by many Australians (Tannoch-Bland 1997). Systemic racism often remains at the out-of-awareness level, yet it provides the foundation for overt expressions of racism. In the following interview selection, one of the non-Indigenous participants shares the impact of racist myths and stereotypes that remain unquestioned, unconsidered by the wider community.

Emotionally you are aware of that at a deeper psychological level and socialisation level. There's no way you would come out unscathed. It is deeply embedded by the mythologies and stereotypes that are there. I used to go to New Farm Park when I was 14 and throw things at the Aboriginal people cause that's what most young White 14 year old Australians do who come from the suburbs. They go into the city; it's a big experience to go to a movie and throw stuff at Aboriginal people. I mean, it's horrific but that's the history. It's just really stupid to assume that you can not be racist. The hope is to become conscious of that and to work on a re-socialisation base... if you

> *ignore that, it's at your own loss cause there's a story there to be explored. I think that's a huge part of the journey (Participant interview 12).*

One aspect of social change that can be uncomfortable for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is the initial stage of bringing conflict to the surface, breaking the silence about racism and colonisation. For example, Indigenous Australians often deal with pressure from non-Indigenous Australians who would prefer that Aborigines remain invisible in order to maintain the *status quo*. In the following interview quotation, one of the non-Indigenous participants shares her experience of bringing racism into conscious awareness in order to facilitate engagement with race issues:

> *My understanding of the situation is that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people have developed a way of living which is going to be of the least problem to them in... relating to the wider community. Now that might mean that they are just going to put their heads down and get on with their life and bring up their kids and send them to school, doing all the things that we just have to do, and don't really want someone coming in from the outside to actually start challenging the status quo in that area. (Non-Indigenous) people have said, well we had no problems here till people started talking about reconciliation. We had no problems here until people like you come to this area and start stirring up trouble. We've always had darkies working on our property and we've never had problems (Participant interview 11, p. 4).*

Participants maintain that conflict transformation requires the implementation of programs designed to decrease racism at all levels. Participants implement programs designed to decrease overt expressions of racism as well as the less obvious racism inherent in poorly informed policies and processes. Indeed, many participants maintain that silent racism, ill informed belief and policy that masquerade as benevolent guidance, is the most devastating form of racism. In the following quotation, Evelyn Scott, chairperson of the Australian Council for Reconciliation, describes the dangers of silent racism:

> This acceptance of racism can be overt - as shown by Ms Hanson's rhetoric – or disguised as pseudo-intellectual and 'practical' policies by others who suggest a degree of sympathy with those concerns. I believe it is the quieter, more 'accepted' racism which, if it continues unquestioned, is more harmful. Ignorance has a lot to answer for as the breeding ground of fear, prejudice and misunderstanding (Scott 2000, pp. 21-22).

Participants experience the complexity of bringing systemic racism into conscious awareness. Racism often involves the silencing of painful and controversial issues involving Indigenous Australians. In the following interview

quotation, one of the non-Indigenous participants describes an experience which involves attempts to silence issues regarding Indigenous land rights. Her attempts to bring racism into conscious awareness were silenced by some of her colleagues, as well as by the press.

> *We were looking at Politics in the Pub and we decided to do something on Native Title. The pub, when they found it was Native Title, cancelled it. (Another group member) and I had gotten dressed up to the nines and went up to the pub to try to tackle them but that didn't work. Other people in the group didn't see it as an issue of racism. They said, 'It's been miscommunication.' So they didn't want anything public. I wrote a press release, trying to make it an article about the event, but trying to raise the fact, very gently, that this pub had cancelled. And of course the paper edited it out. About a hundred people came to that event even though we had to stop people at the pub and say it's not here, it's up at the church hall (Participant interview 7.10).*

Addressing the Systemic Roots of Conflict: Understanding The Effects of Systemic Racism on Personal Expressions of Racism

Participants maintain that systemic racist practice must be modified in order to decrease the alienation and disenfranchisement of Aboriginal Australians from mainstream society. For example, participants experience an increase in expressions of racist sentiment when government officials endorse racist discourse. In the following interview excerpt, one of the Aboriginal participants shares her experience of the increase in racist speech and behaviour during the period in which Pauline Hanson was a member of the Australian Parliament. Hanson's rhetoric included refusal to represent the Aboriginal people of her district as well as public claims that traditional Aboriginal peoples were cannibals. In the following interview selection, one of the Aboriginal participants describes the increase in alienation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians that occurred during this period.

> *...when I first arrived in Brisbane, it was...just easy to get on with people... that was in 1970, 71. And I could walk down the street, you know, and it didn't even worry me, I mean even the colour of your skin. But now it is so hard, I don't know. Maybe the tables have turned and we're still trying. Like all my family, when they come down, they get really scared walking down the street.*
>
> *And I say, 'Why?' and they say, 'Oh, them...those White fellas are going to have a go at us.' And I say, 'You can't look at it like that. You've got to be positive.'*
>
> *Pauline Hanson...she had a really, really big effect on us. And she has brought...a lot of issues out. People have been hiding it for years... even really good friends of mine, and... people that I have known for years. Things that*

they have said! I keep thinking, you know it's amazing, you've harboured all these thoughts and... it's taken someone like her to bring it all out. So I really found who were my true friends.

I think one of the saddest days was, you know,
When She came on the scene,
We were all excited for the launch of reconciliation.
We got up early,
I went to the station and met a friend,
Ready to catch the train.
I got the paper and front page was:
They're All Cannibals.
And they're all from the Palmer River.
That's where my mum was from.
It gets really, really hard.
But you've got to keep working it out.
You've got to keep working it out
(Participant interview 2.19-2.20).

Continued expressions of racism fuel conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. Another Aboriginal participant shares the increased racist behaviour that she experienced while Pauline Hanson was affecting political debate in Australia. This participant experienced taxi drivers increasing the volume on talkback radio programs that provide a forum for openly expressed racist discourse. In this participant's experience, systemic racism perpetuated through media and government increases the conflict she experiences between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians.

While we had the Hanson factor, they didn't care what they said to you in a taxi. It's gone back to being that cautiousness. You know that sort of teasing type thing and not the outright turning up of the Jones' or Laws radio while you were in the car. Hopefully it's swinging around for the best, but I think the next government will swing it around even further if it's Labor. And we might get back to human decency and rights.

I think the basic thing I've learned about reconciliation is just how people's attitudes and prejudices are so deeply ingrained and held. They won't let go of it and the more they're fed of the negative stuff, the more they're gonna soak up the bad food that's being fed to them rather than hearing the other arguments (Participant interview 5.26-5.27).

Addressing the Systemic Roots of Conflict: Addressing White Race Privilege

Participants maintain that out-of-awareness aspects of racism are deeply divisive in their effects on behaviour and policy. For instance, participants experience frustration regarding non-Indigenous Australians who remain ignorant of their own experience of race privilege. As discussed previously, many non-

Indigenous Australians who would never deliberately engage in racist behaviours are at the same time often unaware of their own race privilege and the way it affects Indigenous Australians (Tannoch-Bland 1997).

One of the major characteristics of white race privilege is the option to regard race issues as peripheral, to engage with them only if they are of interest to the individual (Walker 1999b, p. 276). In the following interview quotation, one of the Aboriginal participants describes her experience of race privilege. She maintains that whereas Aboriginal Australians live each day with racism, non-Indigenous Australians have the option to remain ignorant of many aspects of racism.

> *The majority have just never been taught it, have never been socialised into it, and therefore don't have any ownership of it. So it's easy for them to ignore it (Participant interview 5.33).*

The option to remain uninformed regarding Aboriginal experience and race issues pervades dominant Australian society, even in arenas in which knowledge and informed opinion are prized. In the following interview quotation, an Indigenous lecturer at a major university expresses her experience of the impact of white race privilege on current conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians:

> ...it is my job to answer questions. Yet the stupidity and rapidity of it all is fatiguing. The amazing array of questions asked with monotonous regularity indicates to me that mainstream Australia does not know its own history... This 'not knowing' by whitefellas of what has happened in their own backyards, for yonks, both fascinates and infuriates me. Fascinates me, because such institutional hierarchies are supposed to represent all that is worth knowing. And infuriates me, because often more is known about South Africa and New Zealand and their racial issues than about our own country.
>
> This not knowing has diminished whitefellas. Generational ignorance has left them bereft, regardless of whether it is recognised or not. And I say that in all sadness and kindness. It is this not knowing that creates the ignorance and stereotypes, which we as indigenous people deal with regularly –even daily. This not knowing seems to be a luxury of white supremacy, which allows people to refrain from the pain of pondering. It allows for filtering, denying and discarding that which is uncomfortable; and there is no doubt that Aboriginal existence in this country has been and continues to be too uncomfortable for most to contemplate (Holt 2000, pp. 149-150).

Summary

Participants describe racism as one of the systemic roots of current conflict. Participants also describe dispossession of traditional Aboriginal lands as perpetuating conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian. In the following section, I discuss ways in which participants conceptualise relationship with land in regard to current conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Addressing the Systemic Roots of Conflict: Damaged Relationship with the Earth

Participants maintain that non-Indigenous Australians' lack of relationship with land is one of systemic roots of conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. The following Aboriginal participant describes the development of relationship with the land as a way of decreasing conflict and alienation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

> *The expectation is that Whites will develop the same sort of spiritual and emotional ties with land that Murris have and that they will take on the same responsibilities for caring for land and custodianship for land that Murris have. That should become part of their consciousness as it has for Murris. How Whites get there I think is a slow process. But they'd get there faster if there were good will and a willingness to learn from the Indigenous population (Participant interview 13.22).*

In Aboriginal participants' worldview, sustainable conflict transformation involves social change that impacts positively upon the earth, as well as upon the inhabitants of the earth. In the following interview quotation, one of the Aboriginal participants explains the necessity of considering relationship with the earth when developing an infrastructure to sustain conflict transformation in Australia.

> *When people talk about reconciliation as between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people only, I think they've got it wrong. There has to be a healing of the rift between people and the earth. The earth can sustain just a certain amount of damage and we are reaching that point. When making decisions about actions that will lead to positive outcomes, we've got to consider what effect that action will have on the earth (Participant Interview 1.46).*

Developing Infrastructures that Sustain Conflict Transformation: Planning for Future Generations

Participants explain that sustainable conflict transformation involves the development of infrastructures that facilitate positive social change. Conflict

transformation that incorporates an infrastructure of positive social change also serves as conflict prevention by laying down a foundation that future generations of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians can utilise to transform their conflicts. In the following interview quotation, one of the non-Indigenous participants shares her support of systemic change that provides educational and justice frameworks for future generations.

> *Let us make sure our children and grandchildren grow up with a knowledge of Aboriginal culture, and what they have endured. Let us ensure they see beneath the surface, so the harm that has been done might be rectified, and changes brought about that will overcome the effects of the past (Participant interview 10.41).*

Participants describe infrastructures of social change as impacting on future generations and shaped by previous generations. Their approach is similar to that of Indigenous approaches to processing conflict discussed in Chapter Three in which outcomes are considered in regard to generations yet to come and ancestors who provided the foundations of current conflict processing. In the following interview quotation, one of the Aboriginal participants describes the generational benefits of building an infrastructure that addresses the systemic roots of conflict. In her experience, sustainable conflict transformation extends into the past as well as into the future.

> *My experiences with reconciliation are connected to the history of my people, to the Dreaming and to the future. Our children will need to continue the process of reconciliation because there will always be some people that don't want to work with Aboriginal people. In this way, my work in developing understanding and relationships extends into the future. I want to lay a foundation that our children can build on.*
>
> *Reconciliation is the last phase of Aboriginal history.*
> *It started from the Dreaming*
> *Right up until where we are today.*
> *I want to be known as an Honourable Ancestor.*
> *I want my descendants to know that I did try*
> *And do something for reconciliation*
> *(Participant interview 2.28-2.29).*

Summary

Participants in conflict transformation experience the effectiveness of working together to implement positive social change at both personal and systems levels. Their experience of working together on sustainable social change is characterised by projects that facilitate conflict transformation over the long term. These projects

include anti-racism and reconciliation projects. Participants emphasise the importance of learning personal skills of responding effectively to racism, and of implementing infrastructures that address systemic racism and disruption of relationship with traditional Aboriginal lands. Participants' experience in these areas has the potential to inform the discipline of conflict studies. In the final section of this chapter, I discuss the relevance of this theme to the discipline of conflict studies.

Working Together: Implications for Conflict Studies

The findings discussed in this chapter illuminate the importance of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians working together to build infrastructures designed to implement systemic change. In this section, I compare participants' experience with Indigenous conflict processing, Western conflict resolution and Western conflict transformation.

Indigenous methods of consensual conflict processing parallel participants' experience in several ways. Indigenous methods of processing conflict do not directly address conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in colonised societies. However, they emphasises similar principles of 'making things right' which involve many members of the community working together to restore harmony, reduce adversarial relations and mend the web of interconnections that sustain social harmony. Examples of these processes can be found in the Navajo Harmony Ceremony (Yazzie 1995), the Cherokee Talking Circle (Garrett 1998), The Medicine Wheel Model (Huber 1993) and Ho'oponopono (Shook & Kwan 1987).

The dominant Western conflict resolution models focus on solving problems through meeting individual needs (Avruch & Black 1990). Although they address underlying causes of conflict, their methods emphasise the agreements that are reached within the problem solving sessions. Conflict resolution methodology does not encompass wider social action in which participants work together to implement positive social change. The findings discussed in this chapter indicate that these aspects are crucial in sustaining positive change. In conflicts in deeply divided societies, agreements made in isolation from wider societal concerns may perpetuate conflict or cause the conflict to flare up again at a future date (Lederach 1997).

The work of conflict transformation scholars closely parallels participants' experience of implementing positive social change. Scholars Lederach (1997) and Bush and Folger (1994) maintain that changes in individuals and society are integral to the processes of conflict transformation. Bush and Folger (1994) explain that in conflict transformation processes, changes in society are brought about indirectly through changes in the individuals involved in the conflict. Bush and Folger (1994, p. 92) describe conflict transformation as involving processes in which

> ...the party realizes and enacts his [sic] capacity to acknowledge, consider, and be concerned about others. Though he is in the midst of difficulties of his own, he has chosen not to focus exclusively on his own needs and concerns but to strive consciously to understand the perspective and take account of the concerns of the other party. As a result, he reaches beyond himself to relate to another person's common humanity in a concrete way.

The findings emphasis on structural change is supported by Western scholars of conflict transformation who also emphasise the importance of going beyond immediate conflict and addressing the systemic roots of conflict. Lederach (1997) particularly emphasises the importance of developing infrastructures designed to redress systemic concerns, explaining that in deeply divided societies, solely addressing the immediate conflict is not enough to sustain long term transformation (Lederach 1997). Likewise the findings discussed in this chapter indicate that systemic roots of conflict must be modified through infrastructures of education, training and projects designed to reduce racism and implement positive social change.

Summary

This chapter has focused on participants' experience in working together to implement social change through addressing both personal and systemic change. Furthermore, participants maintain that sustainable conflict transformation involves the implementation of infrastructures that sustain long term transformation of the conflict. Throughout their experiences, participants encounter inequalities in opportunities to have their worldview expressed and accepted, as well as in their ability to influence public debate. In the following chapter I discuss the theme regarding participants' experiences of addressing the inequalities inherent in colonised societies.

CHAPTER TWELVE

ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES

> ...we are starting a new era for reconciliation... equality, respect, and social justice for indigenous peoples (Evelyn Scott, chair of Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation 2000, p. 19).

In the previous findings chapters, I illuminated participants' experiences of transforming conflict through the processes of increasing understanding, building relationships and working together to implement social change. As evidenced by participants' stories, Aboriginal Australians experience many inequalities in comparison to non-Indigenous Australians. As discussed in Chapter Four, for example, Aboriginal Australians experience inequalities in opportunities to function within their worldview. Aboriginal Australians also experience socio-economic inequalities in regard to housing, education and health (Tonkinson 1994). Participants in this study maintain that sustainable conflict transformation involves working toward redressing these inequalities. They also explain that redressing inequalities often requires processes that provide Aboriginal Australians with unequal amounts of time, attention and financial support. In this chapter, I elaborate upon the following theme, which is one of the central characteristics of participants' experience in transforming conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians:

Conflict transformation requires accommodation to balance inequalities.

Sustainable conflict transformation involves 'deliberate intervention to provide insight into underlying causes and social conditions that create and foster violence' (Lederach 1997, p. 83). In the Australian context, some of the major underlying social conditions that perpetuate conflict involve inequalities that have resulted from the processes of colonisation. In the first section of this chapter I discuss participants' experiences of developing opportunities for Aboriginal Australians to function within their worldview. I then explore ways in which participants address inequalities in social and economic conditions. In the final section I discuss the ways in which this theme informs the discipline of conflict studies.

Balancing inequalities: Developing Opportunities to Function Within One's Worldview

> Cultural invasion...always involves a parochial view of reality... and the imposition of one world view upon another. (Friere 1974, p. 159).

Aboriginal Australians experience inequalities in regard to their opportunities to function within their worldview within the larger community. Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australian worldviews are dramatically different. However, Aboriginal participants' lack of opportunity to function within their worldview is more than a matter of cultural difference. This lack of opportunity reflects an extreme imbalance in power between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. Through the processes of colonisation, Western worldview has been imposed on Indigenous Australians while at the same time Aboriginal worldview and cultural practices have been suppressed and silenced. In the following interview selection, one of the Aboriginal participants describes his experience of effective responses to the silencing of Aboriginal worldview within academia:

> *History has written the Australian Aborigine into the minds and psyche of people as being the ultimate primitives and lacking in culture. That's part of the historical process that is part of the responsibility that academics have, to sit down and really seriously criticise who and what they are and what their domain is. That is not easy by any means (Participant interview 1.28).*

Participants maintain that cultural imperialism is still occurring in relation to Indigenous Australians in that Western worldview and practice dominate politics, policy making, education and many other areas of Australian society. Decisions that impact upon Indigenous Australians are largely made within the dominant Western worldview. In the following interview selection, an Aboriginal participant describes the processes of Westernisation that continue to silence Aboriginal worldview:

> *I find it very frustrating that Aboriginal people continually respond to what governments say. There's never any equal negotiation. The government puts up its plan, couched in its terms. That only allows Aboriginal people to respond to what they had put up. While they say they have Aboriginal advisors and they have Aboriginal bodies, it is all still couched in White terms of reference. It's never couched in Aboriginal concerns. The words they use (like reconciliation) it's not a word we would even use. Whose word is it? It's not our word and we weren't asked. It's very frustrating and I guess that's why I find I've withdrawn more and more from any political activity. It always comes back to whose terms of reference do we operate on. When you negotiate with White people, they maintain the power of definition in terms of how the debate is going to be carried out and how the debate is going to go and that to me is very frustrating. If we operate on White terms of reference, then we're defeated before we begin and to me that's a useless process. I turn my energy*

> *more into strengthening what Aboriginal terms of reference are and to maintaining those, and that's where my strength and my energy have been more devoted (Participant interview 13.18).*

The imposition of Western worldview also impacts on the process of conflict transformation in Australia by silencing Indigenous worldview. In response, participants maintain that effective conflict transformation must address this silencing by acknowledging and respecting Aboriginal worldview. As discussed in Chapter Three, conflict transformation involves genuine dialogue in which all parties develop an understanding and acknowledgement of the other's experience. It might seem that equal effort would be expended to understand the reality of all parties involved in conflict. However, participants maintain that more attention must be devoted to developing deeper understanding and acknowledgement of Indigenous Australians' worldview. Participants explain that non-Indigenous Australians have not had significant exposure to the history, culture and worldview of Indigenous Australians because these topics were suppressed through the processes of colonisation. In contrast, participants explain that most Indigenous Australians have had a lifetime of immersion into Western worldview, history and experience.

Participants describe the processes of conflict transformation as involving the development of infrastructures that provide opportunities for the expression of Indigenous worldview. For example, participants express the need to modify Australian justice systems in ways that acknowledge and respect Indigenous Australians' rights to function within Aboriginal worldview. Currently, misunderstanding and disregard of Aboriginal worldview restricts Aboriginal Australians' ability to implement sentencing that is in harmony with their traditional justice systems (Lachowicz 1997; Williams 1994).

The Australian legal system frequently penalises Aboriginal Australians for functioning within their worldview. In her research into expressions of Aboriginal language and worldview within the Australian legal system, Diane Eades (1988, 1991) highlights many instances of misunderstanding and non-acceptance of Aboriginal worldview and related linguistic differences. These misunderstandings often result in over-representation of Aboriginal Australians in the legal system. In addition, Aboriginal worldview regarding relationships often conflicts with judicial

expectations of appropriate response during court procedures, resulting in higher rates of sentencing (Eades 1993, pp. 181-190).

Behaviour which indicates appropriate levels of responsibility in Aboriginal worldview, such as taking care of kinship obligations before attending to job obligations, may be considered irresponsible when viewed by non-Indigenous Australians. In many judicial proceedings, Aboriginal Australians are penalised for operating within their worldview, thus further exacerbating conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. In the following interview selection, a non-Indigenous judge is functioning in monochronic non-Indigenous Australian worldview. In monochronic cultures, a day's activities are completed in a linear sequence in which job schedules are ranked above relationships (Hall 1983, pp. 71-73). In contrast, the Aboriginal youth in the following story is functioning in polychronic Aboriginal Australian worldview. In polychronic cultures, employment and relationship obligations are taken care of as they arise, with employment obligations arranged around family and relationship responsibilities rather than taking precedence over them (Hall 1983, pp. 71-73). In the following story, the participant describes the injustice that occurs when Aboriginal behaviour is interpreted within a framework of Western worldview. She describes the increase in probation which the Aboriginal youth receives for leaving his job for a week to visit his sick grandfather in North Queensland. In contrast, according to Aboriginal worldview the youth was behaving responsibly.

> *Many times the behaviour of Aboriginal people is misinterpreted by non-Aboriginal people. This misperception often leads to negative actions on the part of non-Aboriginal people. For example we tend to use English differently, to say yes to mean quite different things than non-Aboriginal people mean when they say yes. We also speak of time differently, referring to important social and relationship events rather than referring to the clock. We have obligations to our families and we see these as more important than obligations to a job. Often this is interpreted by non-Aboriginal people as being unreliable.*
>
> *A Barrister said to this old lady,*
> *'But when he committed a crime, he was up in this other place?'*
> *And she said, 'Yes.'*
> *And before that, he was in this other place?'*
> *And she said, 'Yes.'*
> *And so that means he cannot settle down.'*
> *And she said, 'No. He had to go and visit his grandfather.*
> *His grandfather was sick.'*
> *'Well, why did he leave work to go and visit?'*
> *'Well, he had to!'*

And the Barrister said, 'Ah, no.'
He said, 'He just can't settle down.'
(Participant interview 2.9-2.10).

The Aboriginal participants in this research describe the inequalities involved in trying to function within Aboriginal worldview while meeting the expectations of the Western institutions within which they are employed. For example, Aboriginal participants struggle with meeting kin obligations while at the same time responding adequately to the demands of Western careers. In the following interview quotation, one of the Aboriginal participants describes her struggle to benefit her people by implementing cross-cultural awareness and reconciliation workshops in mainstream society. While working in urban settings, she experiences a loss of opportunities to participate in kinship activities within her Aboriginal clan. Although non-Indigenous Australians also make choices between juggling job and family responsibilities, there is an even greater pressure on Aboriginal people due to the primacy of kinship obligations in Aboriginal worldview. In the following interview quote, the participant describes her efforts to function in a responsible way in relation to Aboriginal kinship obligations, while at the same time implementing social change in the wider community.

I struggle with being an advocate of social change and the time that requires away from my family, being in the public forum. Family is such an important part of Aboriginal lives, and sometimes I can't be with them as much as I would like while I am working for social change.

I feel guilty
Because everyone's gone home
And I'm not there.
Most of us, you know,
We go back home
And try to do what we can
For our people.
My Granny says to me,
Every time when I go home,
She says, 'You don't have to come back
To stay.
What you do out there is good,
Looking after us from out there,
You know.
She is a very wise lady.
(Participant interview 2.13-2.14).

Participants maintain that the processes of colonisation have created inequalities in regard to opportunities to function within Aboriginal worldview. For example, colonial processes of silencing Aboriginal worldview and experience have

interfered with the transmission of Aboriginal worldview to Aboriginal children and youth. In contrast, white Australians have a great deal of freedom to function within their worldview. Accordingly, most Australian schools are dominated by Western worldview and children absorb the dominant Western view of reality. Silencing Aboriginal worldview not only decreases non-Indigenous Australians' understanding and acknowledgement of Aboriginal worldview, it also decreases opportunities for young Aboriginal Australians to develop comprehensive understanding of Aboriginal worldview. The transmission of Aboriginal worldview has been altered through government practices of forced relocations of Aboriginal people, removal of Aboriginal children from their communities and families, and restrictive educational practices (O'Donoghue 2000, pp. 288-296). In the following interview quotation, one of the Aboriginal participants expresses her frustration over the misunderstandings regarding Aboriginal worldview that result from the cultural fragmentation accompanying colonisation. The participant maintains that the silencing of Aboriginal worldview affects both the wider community and Aboriginal youth.

> *I went on to explain*
> *About the Dreaming.*
> *I am sick to death*
> *Of people using the past tense all the time*
> *Because you can't escape the Dreaming.*
> *It's there.*
> *It always will be.*
> *It has always been.*
> *People don't understand.*
> *A lot of our young ones*
> *Have it wrong too*
> *Because they haven't*
> *Had the old ones*
> *To pass it on to them.*
> *(Participant interview 3.11).*

Many processes of conflict transformation are affected by inequalities in opportunities to function within Aboriginal worldview. For example, consensual conflict methodologies which are implemented in Australia are most often based on Western methodologies. In some instances the conflict methodology is *indiginized*, modified to better accommodate Aboriginal Australians' worldview (Beattie 1997; Grose 1995). However, the dominant Western models of processing conflict do not adequately reflect the relational aspects of Aboriginal worldview. In the following interview selection, one of the Aboriginal participants describes the inequalities

inherent in utilising Western conflict methodology to process conflict involving Indigenous Australians. She points out the difference between Western models which emphasise technique, and Aboriginal approaches which emphasise a network of relationships. She further maintains that these inequalities involve more than cultural difference; they involve the domination of Western worldview.

> *...the models that I was being shown that were around didn't work because they were formula driven. And in that formula position, it didn't account for relationships to be acknowledged, let alone developed. It didn't open up space for someone's story and their voice to be told in a way that acknowledged who they were and the cultural practices from where they came, how they built relationship and how they respected other people and themselves in that process.*
>
> *When you negotiate with White people, they maintain the power of definition in terms of how the debate is going to be carried out and that to me is very frustrating (Participant interview 14.3).*

Participants maintain that the dialogical processes of conflict transformation must acknowledge and integrate Aboriginal worldview. For example, Aboriginal approaches to processing conflict emphasise relationship and consensus (Behrendt 1995, p. 17). In contrast, the dominant Western models of conflict resolution and mediation emphasise the satisfaction of individual needs (Bush & Folger 1994). In the following interview quotation, one of the Aboriginal participants describes the difficulties inherent in utilising Western models of processing conflict that emphasise technique rather than process and relationship. She describes the importance of utilising models based on Aboriginal worldview, which emphasise relationship and incorporate elders. Furthermore, she maintains that acknowledging and respecting Aboriginal worldview would increase transformation of conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

> *In my experience, non-Aboriginal ways of resolving conflict have not worked well. I think the more we bring in our way of thinking, learning and relating to others, the more we will be able to resolve conflict between the cultures and increase reconciliation.*
>
> *Put it all into action.*
> *Do it our way for a change.*
> *The other way hasn't worked.*
> *Let our elders and our communities deal with it.*
> *See what we can come up with.*
> *(Participant interview 2.24-2.25).*

Participants maintain that increased understanding of Aboriginal worldview is not enough to reduce inequalities related to its expression. Increased knowledge

must also be accompanied by respect for Aboriginal worldview. For example, participants explain that some non-Indigenous Australians increase their understanding of Aboriginal worldview in order to maintain power over Aboriginal peoples. Rather than acknowledging and respecting Aboriginal worldview, some non-Indigenous Australians use their new found knowledge in order to support their dominant position in Australian society, thus maintaining power and perpetuating inequalities. In the following interview selection, one of the Aboriginal participants describes the ways in which increased knowledge regarding Aboriginal worldview is sometimes used in ways that exacerbate inequalities.

> *I also know that some people take all of this information and use it as empowerment for self need and self interest and are still doing things like negotiating, having that knowledge and then negotiating from that knowledge base for self need. They're not interested in healing, they're not interested in... those things are peripheral issues for them. They use that as a mechanism for strategizing on how to take ownership and power <u>over</u> situations, things, or positions...(Participant interview 14.8).*

Summary

Participants maintain that in order to implement sustainable conflict transformation, inequalities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians must be addressed. They further maintain that one of the inequalities that must be addressed is the lack of opportunities for Aboriginal Australians to function within their worldview within the broader community. Participants explain that Indigenous worldview must be acknowledged, respected and expressed within schools, institutions and the legal system.

Addressing Inequalities in Economic and Social Conditions

> Genuine reconciliation must entail closing the wide gap between indigenous Australians and whitefellas in health, education, employment and all socio-economic indicators (Tonkinson 1994, p. 176).

Similar to Tonkinson, participants in this study maintain that sustainable conflict transformation must include efforts to balance socio-economic inequalities, which exacerbate conflict. In the following subsections, I discuss participants' experience of addressing inequalities in socio-economic status and political voice.

Addressing inequalities of socio-economic status

Participants explain that addressing socio-economic inequalities is an integral aspect of transforming conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. In the following interview quotation, one of the non-Indigenous participants describes inequalities developed through colonisation, and emphasises the importance of addressing them within the processes of conflict transformation.

> *In the case of the Aboriginal population,*
> *They were disenfranchised,*
> *They were disowned of their land,*
> *They were colonised,*
> *They were considered to be non-people.*
> *They were living here,*
> *But they weren't recognised as humans.*
> *Their human rights were denied.*
> *They are still as a result*
> *In a very poor and disadvantaged situation.*
> *We need to address basic tenets of humanity.*
> *That if somebody else suffers,*
> *We need to be compassionate.*
> *We need to be able to empathise and sympathise.*
> *We need to be able to say*
> *To the people who have suffered,*
> *'I'm sorry that happened.'*
> *'I'm sorry for the suffering that caused.'*
> *As a result I can try to at least improve the situation now (Participant interview 4.10).*

Inequalities in socio-economic conditions are linked with depression, loss of self-esteem and hopelessness, all of which exacerbate conflict. These depressed social conditions seem to encourage violence within Aboriginal communities as well as between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians (Hazelhurst 1994, pp. 3-12)). The following interview quotation from a non-Indigenous participant describes the socio-economic situation found in many remote Aboriginal communities. As the participant describes, remote Aboriginal communities often lack adequate education, job opportunities, and affordable food. Many Aboriginal communities were forcibly constructed by the Australian government. Because of this forced integration of rival Aboriginal clans, many Aboriginal communities experience frequent conflicts. All of these situations intensify despair and conflict. In the following interview selection, one of the participants describes the necessity of developing infrastructures that address inequalities in socio-economic opportunities in order to engender sustainable conflict transformation.

> *When you've got problems, you are going to escape the problems, make things feel better. In Aboriginal communities where you've got great problems, you've got great frustrations because of history and the immense oppression. If you've got no hope of going out and going to school somewhere else, to get into some other sort of interesting job. If there's poverty, if a tomato costs $3.00...*
>
> *There's the historical factors also. You've maybe got people from different historical groups brought together and underlying issues which have never been resolved. You haven't got education about how you're going to sort out conflicts which arise and if you've got remoteness, drinking to excess to sort of make yourself feel happy is in every community. If you're drunk and you've got no hope and you're frustrated and you're angry, or there is no inner something to sort it out in a peaceful way, you're going to lash out one way or another. I think Martin Luther King said, 'keep hope alive.' I think hope is really important to have some light, something that you think the future is going to hold for you.*
>
> *I'm trying to link that with political things. If you see this from the broader perspective and your social and political forces and institutions, if they're sincere about wanting to provide better life for citizens then I think people will be more inclined to actually say there is some future where we can all join this thing (Participant interview 6.20-6.21).*

Funding programs have been implemented to redress inequalities in Indigenous Australians' education, housing, health and employment opportunities. Nevertheless, these funding programs are themselves a constant source of conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Many non-Indigenous Australians maintain that all Australians should receive equal treatment, and that special funding programs for Aboriginal Australians offer unfair advantage (Ridgeway 2000, p. 12-17). In contrast, participants in conflict transformation maintain that unequal means are sometimes necessary to achieve equal ends. In the following quotation, a non-Indigenous Australian involved in conflict transformation describes the processes of redressing historical inequalities. She explains that special funding programs for Aboriginal Australians are often misinterpreted as unearned special privileges.

> This reconciliation has to be based first of all on historical memory, on the recognition of wrongs of the past and the obligation which then follows to make some restitution. This recognition puts paid to the unimaginative, if not silly, argument that Aborigines today are given 'special privileges'. As the brief glimpses I've had of the lives of Aboriginal people in Western Australia today, even of those who've apparently 'made it', make clear, they are still profoundly disadvantaged, seldom treated as equals, are often despised, and must continually fight for recognition and respect (Brady 1994, p. 142).

In the following interview citation, one of the non-Indigenous participants describes the importance of establishing infrastructures that offer special placement and funding opportunities to Indigenous Australians. This participant maintains that equal opportunities require an equal playing field and that Aboriginal Australians have not experienced equal education, human rights nor economic opportunities in comparison to non-Indigenous Australians. He further argues that there is an element of racism in the wider Australian community's opposition to special funding for Aboriginal Australians in that non-Indigenous Australians are accepting of unequal opportunities offered to other groups of Australians.

> *There can be no harmonious community relations in Australia before reconciliation has happened. Reconciliation, at the end, has a very practical meaning and the practical meaning is to accept that we need to bring the Aboriginal population onto a level where they can fully compete with and contribute to everybody else in society.*
>
> *So all that nonsense that say, a Pauline Hanson comes out with about, you know, treating all Australians equally, is just rubbish. We are not equal in the sense of the same. I mean, what she is confusing linguistically is equality and sameness, right? Whereas equal may mean in the sense of the same human rights that we all should have, but we are not the same. Our capabilities are not the same and therefore we need to be able as a society to address those differentiations and we address them in some cases, but in others they say it is not legitimate.*
>
> *We are not equal*
> *In the sense of the same.*
> *Why should we advantage those in sports?*
> *They get special grants.*
> *Why should we advantage those in the arts?*
> *They get special grants.*
> *Why should we advantage those who are especially gifted in education?*
> *They get special grants.*
> *Why should we advantage the aged?*
> *They get special grants.*
> *But not the Aboriginals.*
> *Whom we have caused in the first place*
> *To be where they are.*
> *That's what reconciliation*
> *Is all about.*
> *The ability to see those matters.*
> *(Participant interview 4.14).*

Non-Indigenous Australians who oppose equal opportunity programs for Aboriginal Australians often refer to the programs as 'special treatment', maintaining that such programs are inappropriate in a democratic society based on ideals of equality (Ridgeway 2000; Garrett 2000). Participants in this study

maintain that such claims ignore the historical treatment of Aboriginal Australians. Participants also explain that the effects of previous government policies on Indigenous Australians go deeper than social and economic status; they affect the minds, hearts and spirits of Indigenous Australians. In his essay on reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, Peter Garrett (2000, p. 182) uses Aboriginal songs to develop a deeper understanding of inequalities and the special programs needed to redress them:

> The music and words of Aboriginal artists have a greater force and eloquence, and elicit deeper insights into the whole business of reconciliation, than any essay can attempt to provide.

In the following song, Garret (2000) contrasts historical treatment of Aborigines with the 'supposed special treatment' that some Australian citizens and politicians claim is afforded Aboriginal Australians. These lyrics illustrate the systematic deprivation of social, economic and human rights that now require special measures to redress.

Grandfather walked this land in chains
A land he called his own
He was given another name
And taken into town
He got special treatment
He got special treatment
Very special treatment
My father worked a twelve hour day
Mustering on his station
The very same work but not the same pay
As his white companions
He got special treatment
Mother and father loved each other well
But together they could not stay
They were split up against their will
Until their dying day
They got special treatment...
Mother gave birth to a stranger's child
A child she called her own
Strangers came and took away that child
To a stranger's home
She got special treatment...
I never spoke my mother's tongue
I never knew my name
I never learnt the songs she sung
I was raised in shame
I got special treatment...
We got special treatment
We got special treatment

> Very special treatment
> (Kelly, cited in Garrett 2000).

Participants maintain that current equal opportunity programs for Indigenous Australians do not constitute special treatment in the sense of being unfair. Rather participants maintain that the historical treatment of Aboriginal peoples requires special programs to balance the inequities that are a legacy of colonisation.

Summary

Participants describe conflict transformation as including programs that address inequalities in socio-economic conditions. These programs often include special funding programs and opportunities to address the inequalities that have resulted from colonisation.

Inequalities in Social Conditions: Inequalities of Political Voice

Aboriginal Australians also experience inequalities in political voice, with their input seldom considered to be cogent political discourse (Petty 1994, pp. 31-36). Thus to a large degree Aboriginal experience has been silenced within the larger Australian community. Aboriginal issues are often heard by a significant portion of the non-Indigenous populace only when voiced by a non-Indigenous Australian. The following quotation is from a speech given by Camilla Cowley, a non-Indigenous Australian. Camilla was instrumental in implementing the first privately arranged Native Title Agreement which insures the Gunggari Aboriginal people perpetual access to their traditional lands (Cowley, cited in Camilla's Conversion 1998). In this quotation, Camilla is describing the structural violence of ignoring Aboriginal Australians' voice. She describes her discomfort at the attention that is given her white voice rather than to the voices of the Gunggari people who have been working to regain their land for over two hundred years.

> I find it a little ironic that after 18 months of trying to be heard over the din of all their opponents, the Gunggari voice is being heard here tonight (at the ANTAR dinner) because one white housewife from the bush has entered the debate. What does that tell us here tonight about our society, about our value system, our priorities, and our sense of justice? I think it tells us that Australia has a way to go yet before we can fully value the extraordinary people like Ethel Munn who have achieved so much despite all the difficulties and deprivations of life in white society. That she has surmounted all difficulties and yet remained a woman with tolerance for the ignorance of white society is heroism in its purist form (Cowley 1997, p. 7).

Inequalities regarding Aboriginal voice are also found within academia. In the following interview selection one of the Aboriginal participants shares his experience of the silencing of Aboriginal voice. He describes the ways in which Aboriginal voice is silenced in political debate within the media and the political arena. He also emphasises the crucial role of Aboriginal voices in transforming conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous peoples.

> *If you sort of want to roll the reconciliation into sort of a nutshell sort of thing is: there's all this opinion and counter opinion and discussion and debate raging between politicians, between the public and the media, talkback radio, but no one has really been prepared to sit down and listen and say, 'Aboriginal people are saying this and even though it might starkly oppose what I have been socialised into understanding, I am going to give it fair thought and try to meld it into who and what I am and how I behave' (Participant interview 1.28).*

Summary

Participants maintain that sustainable conflict transformation involves redressing social and economic inequalities. They emphasise the importance of social programs designed to ameliorate the inequalities that are a legacy of colonisation. Furthermore, they explain that their experience involves developing opportunities for Aboriginal voice to be heard in the debate regarding current conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Balancing Inequalities: Implications for the discipline of Conflict Studies

The findings discussed in this chapter have the potential to inform the discipline of conflict studies. Sustainable conflict transformation in deeply divided societies involves addressing the systemic roots of conflict (Lederach 1997). In the Australian context, the systemic roots of conflict include socio-economic inequalities between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians, and lack of opportunities for Aboriginal peoples to function within their worldview. Western conflict resolution and mediation have been criticised for their inability to address systemic inequalities in which conflicts are embedded (Able 1987). In contrast, sustainable conflict transformation, as described by Lederach (1997), involves infrastructures designed to ameliorate systemic inequalities which perpetuate

conflict. In the following subsections, I discuss the ways in which participants' experience of addressing inequalities informs the discipline of conflict studies.

Balancing Inequalities in Opportunity to Function within Worldview

> Today one might say that cognitive imperialism has been added to the goals of conversion and assimilation of the dominant governing society (Begay & Maryboy 1998, p. 30)

As discussed in previous sections of this chapter, inequality of opportunity for Aboriginal Australians to function within their worldview is one of the systemic roots of conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. One of the structural dimensions of sustainable conflict transformation involves the development of infrastructures that offer equal opportunities for Aboriginal Australians to function within their worldview within the wider Australian community. However, increasing opportunities for functioning within previously silenced Aboriginal worldview is made more difficult by the out-of-awareness nature of worldview (Hall 1983). When one group of people hold a predominance of power, as is the case in colonised societies, the worldview of the dominant group becomes the reality on which most procedures and policy are based. The dominant group is often unaware of other worldviews because they are under little pressure to consider ontologies other than their own. Thus colonised Indigenous peoples are often forced to function within Western worldview.

The findings discussed in this chapter indicate that increased opportunities for colonised Indigenous peoples to function within their own worldview is a central aspect of sustainable conflict transformation. Likewise, in discussing transformative approaches, Western conflict transformation scholars maintain that acknowledgement and accommodation of differing worldviews are critical issues in developing sustainable peace (Galtung 1996, pp. 81-83; Lederach 1997, p. 94).

Conflict transformation processes that involve Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians must acknowledge and accommodate Aboriginal worldview. Too often, consensual dialogical processes such as conflict resolution and mediation are structured solely on Western worldview (Avruch & Black 1990, 1991; Lederach 1995). In contrast, sustainable conflict transformation involves 'discovering and building on the cultural resources for conflict resolution that exist within the context' (Lederach 1997, p. 97).

As discussed in these findings, failure to acknowledge and respect differences in worldview is a continuing source of conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. Attempts to proselytise Western worldview continue to be a source of chronic conflict in colonised countries (Hall 1983, p. 86). In the following quotation, Hall (1983, pp. 8, 200-201) describes the ways in which conflicts are perpetuated by the suppression of different worldviews:

> Human beings have reached the point where they can ill afford the luxury of ignoring the reality of the many different cultural worlds in which humans live. Paradoxically, for the Westerner, the study of contrasting cultures can be an exercise in consciousness raising... As long as human beings and the societies they form continue to recognize only surface culture and avoid the underlying primary culture, nothing but unpredictable explosions and violence can result... First we must be willing to admit that the people of this planet don't just live in one world but in many worlds and some of these worlds, if not properly understood, can and do annihilate the others.

Balancing inequalities in social and economic conditions

The findings in this chapter indicate that sustainable conflict transformation within Australian requires special funding programs designed to provide equal opportunities for Indigenous Australians. Such programs are an integral part of the infrastructure designed to address the systemic roots of conflict. These process-structures contrast with Western conflict resolution methodologies, yet are supported by processes of Western conflict transformation.

Rather than focussing on underlying individual interests and needs, as do Western conflict resolution and mediation, conflict transformation focuses on the systemic concerns which perpetuate conflict (Lederach 1997). Furthermore, conflict transformation involves the development of subsystems (Lederach 1997, pp. 55-61) that link immediate conflicts with deeper systemic issues. In the Australian context, subsystems include special funding and placement programs designed to afford Aboriginal Australians equal social and economic opportunities.

Conclusion

Sustainable conflict transformation in deeply divided societies involves infrastructures designed to address inequalities. Participants' experience suggests that developing sustainable conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in colonised societies involves balancing inequalities in socio-

economic conditions and expression of worldview. Therefore, infrastructures that enhance the provision of equal opportunities regarding these issues become an integral part of sustainable conflict transformation. Processes that address current conflicts without addressing these inequalities at best lead to short term solutions to conflict. At worst, they exacerbate current conflicts and imbalances.

In this chapter, I have discussed participants' experiences of addressing inequality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. In the following chapter, I discuss the theme of personal transformation within conflict transformation.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

> ...the ideal response to conflict is not problem-solving, but *transformation* of the individuals involved... (Folger & Bush 1994, p. 16).

In conflict transformation, participants experience processes of co-creative change. As they participate in transforming conflict through developing deep understanding, building relationships and working together to implement social change, they also find themselves transformed. Participants describe the development of deeper levels of self-awareness through their participation in conflict transformation. They also describe experiences which strengthened their identity and facilitate their healing. In this chapter, I illuminate the following theme, which is one of the central characteristics of participants' experience of conflict transformation:

> **People involved in conflict transformation experience processes of self transformation which include:**
>
> - **increased self awareness**
> - **strengthened identity**
> - **healing**

Personal transformation is also one of the central characteristics of Indigenous conflict processing, which incorporates methods designed to enhance personal growth and healing. Examples of healing processes can be found in the Medicine Wheel Model (Huber 1993, p. 357), the Navajo Harmony Ceremony (Yazzie 1995) and Hawaiian Ho'oponopono (Shook & Kwan 1987).

Likewise, Western conflict transformation scholars acknowledge personal transformation as an integral component of transformative approaches to processing conflict (Bush & Folger 1994; Lederach 1997, p. 82). Lederach (1997, p. 82) further maintains that conflict transformation involves intervention designed to enhance intellectual, spiritual, emotional and perceptual aspects of personal growth. Bush & Folger (1984, p. 16) maintain that the primary goal of conflict transformation is the personal transformation of the people involved.

In the following sections of this chapter, I discuss participants' experiences of personal transformation. In the first section, I illuminate participants' experiences of increased self-awareness. Then I elaborate upon participants' experience of strengthening identity through the processes of conflict transformation. In the third section, I discuss participants' experience of healing. Finally, I consider the implications of this theme for the discipline of conflict studies.

Personal Transformation: Increased Self Awareness

Participants explain that the processes of conflict transformation involve the development of deeper levels of self-awareness. In learning to see through 'different eyes,' through another person's point of view, one also develops the ability to look at oneself differently. This new awareness involves a deeper understanding of self, particularly those aspects that are part of primary culture, aspects of self that often remain at out-of-awareness levels of consciousness (Hall 1983).

Within a paradigm of interconnectedness, deeper understanding of one's self involves recognising interconnections between self and others. Therefore increased self-awareness is not limited to a deeper understanding of one's self as an individual, rather a deeper understanding of self-in-community (Lederach 1997). For example, participants' experience of increased self awareness involves a deeper understanding of the kind of community they want to strive for, as well as a clearer picture of where they fit within that community.

In the following interview quotation, one of the non-Indigenous participants describes the increase in her self-awareness that has taken place through the process of transforming conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. She emphasises the interconnections between self-awareness and heightened awareness regarding one's connection to community and others within that community.

> *We moved a great deal, we never stayed anywhere more than a year or two. When talking about reconciliation, and about self knowing, I think a part of it for me is that spiritual stuff of finding out who you are.*
>
> *Australia wasn't mine,*
> *But I've chosen it to be*
> *I have a family*
> *And I've lived here for 9 years.*
> *It's making Australia mine in a way.*
> *How would I do that?*
> *How would it feel?*
> *What would I need*

To make it mine
And understand myself in that place too.
The work of reconciliation is a part of that.
What kind of Australia,
What kind of society do we want?
(Participant interview 7.22-7.23).

Increased awareness of self-in-community involves recognising one's interrelationships within the power structure of the community. Through participation in the processes of conflict transformation, non-Indigenous Australians experience an increased awareness of the privileges they enjoy by being part of the politically dominant group. In the following quotation, a non-Indigenous Australian involved in conflict transformation shares his experience of developing awareness of the ways in which he has benefited from belonging to the dominant group of settler Australians:

> Though there is no blood on my hands or yours, you and I are the beneficiaries of our foreparent's actions or inactions. We are the recipients of stolen goods. The men who cleared the land of trees and rocks to grow crops and graze stock also cleared the land of its owners and users. Those invaders said they demolished and destroyed and killed for the sake of future generations. We are all part of that future planned by others. Like you, my family and I find shelter, warmth, profit, security, pleasure, comfort and joy from living on the proceeds...(Graham 1994, p. 107).

Increased self-awareness also involves an increased acknowledgement of one's current role in perpetuating alienation and conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Participants emphasise the importance of being aware of both the intent and the impact of one's behaviour in regard to relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. In the following interview selection, one of the Indigenous participants shares the words of Belsah Lower, an Indigenous Australian (Torres Strait Islander) who is deeply involved in reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. In this interview story, the participant and Belsah were presenting a workshop which encouraged deeper awareness of the ways one's behaviour impacts upon social justice and reconciliation:

As a colleague of mine said, in following up a session that I was doing, he said,
Three words.
How to behave.
You should look in the mirror
every morning and say,

Who am I
And how am I behaving?
How am I behaving
As a woman,
As a man,
As a parent,
As a son,
As a daughter?
How am I behaving
As a respectable human being
Who is prepared to treat others
With respect and dignity?
(Participant interview 1.30-1.31).

Australian participants' deeper awareness of self-in-community involves an acknowledgement and acceptance of Aboriginal peoples as an integral part of the Australian community. Often Aboriginal Australians experience being relegated to the category of 'social problem'. At other times, they find themselves rendered 'extinct', 'real' Aborigines having been mentally consigned by many non-Indigenous Australians to a past that does not impinge upon the modern world. In contrast to these portrayals of Aboriginal Australians, participants maintain that a deeper awareness of self-in-community involves acceptance and acknowledgement of Aboriginal peoples as integral and respected parts of the community. In the following interview selection, one of the Aboriginal participants shares his experience of the importance of developing awareness of self-in-community that includes both Aboriginal and settler Australians.

The power of the issue
Is epitomised in this statement by my son.
He said,
'You know, Dad,
Mum would prefer it if we were 'White.'
His mum is a really lovely person,
There's no question about it.
He loves her
And so he should,
But he has perceived that his mother,
As fine a person as she is,
Has not really come to terms with the idea
Of accepting Aboriginality in her life.
Aborigines are here,
They have always been here
And we are here to stay.
People have to accept
That part of the equation
Of their life.
(Participant interview 1.36-1.38).

Summary

Personal transformation involves processes of increased self awareness (Bush & Folger 1994). Increased self-awareness facilitates acknowledgement of self-in-community. This concept is framed within the relational worldview which characterises conflict transformation, in which human moral growth involves 'strength of self and relation to the other' (Bush & Folger 1994, p. 230). In conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians, increased self-awareness involves a deeper understanding of one's personal role in the processes of colonisation and the resultant conflict. It also involves deepening awareness of the ways in which one's personal behaviours either perpetuate or ameliorate current conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians.

Deeper awareness of self-in-community also strengthens identity. In the following section I illuminate participants' experience of strengthened identity.

Personal Transformation: Strengthened Identity

Participants maintain that engaging in the processes of conflict transformation also strengthens their identity. Through participating in the processes of conflict transformation, participants know more clearly who they are. Participants explain that understanding one's own worldview and history strengthens identity, allowing them to work more effectively within their own culture and worldview, as well as to work cross-culturally. In the following interview segment a non-Indigenous participant shares her experience of strengthening identity through participating in processes designed to improve relationships and social justice issues involving Indigenous Australians. She maintains that strengthened identity as a white Australian enhances her work in conflict transformation.

> *What I saw as the main thing was that it was a matter of working with my own mob, that my job wasn't to help the poor Black people but working with my own mob to change perceptions. There was a fair bit of self-interest in that I don't feel it is philanthropy, or anything like that. I see it as knowing who I am. Through that experience I knew who I was as a White Australian (Participant interview 7.8).*

In conflict transformation, Aboriginal participants experience an increasing valuing of their own cultural identity, which has been devalued by non-Indigenous Australians through the processes of colonisation. In the following interview selection, one of the Aboriginal participants describes how her identity was

strengthened by participating in efforts to transform conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. She describes a shift in her identity from considering herself as a member of a victimised group to being a member of a group whose knowledge could benefit all Australians.

> *I started off basically in a political way, even though there's this whole cultural world which I had grown up with. They call it assumed knowledge. But that was just there, waiting, and I would use it, but not as much as I should have. When I came back into the community, it broadened out from that one autonomous group, my own mob, and my understanding, deep understanding of what it means, what an Aboriginal worldview is, as opposed to just what one mob thought. I went from looking at Aboriginal people as being victims (it was a slow, gradual sort of change) to seeing that Aboriginal cultural values had an intrinsic worth just in themselves and as possible examples to teach other people, other cultures. Something to offer, not just to always see it as: we've been hard done by (Participant interview 9.5).*

Strengthened identity also involves a deeper understanding of relationships. Indeed, strengthening identity through conflict transformation might be described as developing a clearer picture of one's self-in-community. In the following interview selection, one of the Aboriginal participants describes personal transformation as being linked with identities that are of service to the community. She describes experiences in which participants move from feeling powerless to feeling competent in effecting positive social change. In the following interview selection, one of the Aboriginal participants describes the ways in which self identity is strengthened through methods of conflict transformation that empower individuals-in-community.

> *People have been quite transformed by the process, that probably never knew anything about Indigenous peoples before but have made an effort to find out and educate themselves about the issues of Indigenous culture and histories and then they've gone out and spread the words themselves, which I find very, very gratifying and very intriguing that they've changed themselves and transformed themselves and they've become the new educators (Participant interview 5.14).*

Paradoxically, stronger identity is often enhanced through participating in conflict transformation in settings outside of one's normal environment. In trying to make sense of oneself in the new situation, one often comes to a stronger sense of identity in relation to their regular environment. In the following interview selection, one of the non-Indigenous participants describes the increase in self-awareness that occurred during a time she was working in remote Aboriginal communities in Cape York. In her regular environment, she is part of the dominant

culture, which has benefited from colonisation in many ways. In Cape York, which is populated primarily by Aboriginal peoples, she was a minority. She is describing an incident in Cape York which strengthened her identity, enabling her to work more constructively toward transforming conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians.

> *I was having fever*
> *And I can remember*
> *Very clearly:*
> *I imagined myself*
> *In the tip of the Cape*
> *Like the tip of a mountain*
> *And it was very precarious.*
> *You're a minority.*
> *It reinforces to me*
> *To know who I am,*
> *I am a White Middle Class Australian*
> *Of goodwill.*
> *My job is to work with my mob.*
> *I'll build relationships*
> *That are appropriate to achieve the goal*
> *But I'm not going to pretend*
> *That I'm something that I'm not.*
> *I don't think the issue is fitting*
> *Into Aboriginal communities,*
> *The issue is to do the bit that you can*
> *To make it a fair deal on both sides.*
> *(Participant interview 7.12).*

As discussed previously in this section, strengthened identity involves a clearer picture of where one belongs within their society. Strengthened identity also involves a clearer understanding of how one might participate in transforming that society in ways that increase social justice for all members of the society. In the following interview quotation, a non-Indigenous Australian explains the clarity she achieved regarding her place of belonging within Australian society. She developed this clearer sense of identity through participating in the processes of conflict transformation.

> *And, to me, that was a positive thing to acknowledge where you fit and I said, 'But I do belong here and if I belong here I own the history as well as the present.' And my job was to work with my own mob in like a social justice framework (Participant interview 7.04).*

Participants maintain that although they are seeking common ground, they are not seeking to assume a common identity. Rather they are seeking to retain their distinct cultural identities while sharing a common purpose and a common land. In the following interview selection, one of the Aboriginal participants shares her

experience of non-Indigenous Australians who seek to assume some aspect of Aboriginal identity rather than developing stronger settler-Australian identities. She is describing the responses of people who participate in the colonisation workshops which she facilitates.

> *I think they (non-Indigenous Australians) see Aboriginal people as a medium or a conduit to the spiritual. It isn't even Aboriginal spirituality as such. It's just the spiritual world. They think they can use that, as if you can sort of get on a bus and arrive somewhere else. They have their own personal views about why they come to this workshop and partly it is because they are feeling lost themselves and they think that somehow Aboriginal stuff, Indigenous stuff will help them almost to become whole. There's more than a little bit of wanting to take on a new religion, take on becoming Murri in some way or another (Participant interview 9.17).*

Participants maintain that strengthening identity in ways that enhances conflict transformation involves the development of both an understanding of Whiteness and an understanding of Aboriginality. In the following interview citation, one of the non-Indigenous participants explains that in strengthening identity as a non-Indigenous Australian, it is necessary to understand Whiteness before one can adequately understand Aboriginal Australians' experience of Australian society.

> *When I lived in Sydney, I lived in Redfern, and I moved amongst people who really are the most disadvantaged. And a great many Aboriginal people were amongst those. It was a time of confusion in my life. I didn't really know what I wanted, who I was. Part of this work is working toward finding out who I am, what I could do. That stuff of always observing 'the other' instead of looking inward, looking at: what can we learn about Aboriginal people, what can we learn about their spirituality, their history without ever looking at our own. There seems to be a move to do that now, to analyse ourselves and analyse Whiteness. Analyse that position before you talk about the other position. That's a really hard thing to do (Participant interview 7.24).*

Participants explain that at times strengthening identity involves processes of shifting identity. One non-Indigenous Australian participating in conflict transformation described the process as a 'shaking up and remaking' of her life (Ashforth 1994, p. 45). Personal transformation may involve a period of painful disorientation between relinquishing one's previous familiar identity and fully embracing a new identity. In the following quotation Camilla Cowley, a non-Indigenous Australian, describes the transition state in which she found herself after she became unwilling to retain her identity as an unquestioning member of the dominant group of settler Australians. Camilla Cowley's pastoral property in Western Queensland was part of a Native Title Land Claim. Concerned about losing her family property, she chose to speak with the relevant Aboriginal land council.

Through dialogue with the Gungarri Aboriginal people, particularly Ethel and George Munn, Camilla came to a deeper understanding of Aboriginal Australians' land rights. In the following quotation, she is describing the shift in her identity that occurred as she became educated, developed dialogue and began to work together with the Gungarri people and other Australians striving to transforming conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

> Thus arose the passion in my efforts at self education and my alienation from many of my former acquaintances so that now I feel at times a stateless person, cast adrift between two worlds, neither of which can be home to me. I will never be part of the Aboriginal world except in spirit – one of love and respect, for I am not an Aborigine. I cannot return to a white landholder world as reflected in the ethos of Howard's 10 Point Plan which seeks to quash most of the gains of the Mabo ruling, the Native Title Act and the Wik decision.
>
> Experiences unreflected upon dehumanise – and so it had been for me. Until I met Ethel and her family, my knowledge of Aboriginal history was a vague unreflected one, disembodied in its distance and not involving the real people whose lives bear the scars of that history. By her friendship, and her patience with my ignorance of history, Ethel has made it possible for me to own the past, to own the truth of our nation's as yet unacknowledged debt for the diminished role indigenous Australians have been given in that history (Cowley 1997, pp. 6-7).

Summary

Participants maintain that engaging in conflict transformation strengthens their identity by clarifying understanding of where they fit within their society. They also explain that strengthened identity lessens their need to in someway take on the identity of another. As explained in the previous sections of this chapter, participants' experiences of personal transformation also involve increased self-awareness. Furthermore, the personal transformation includes deep processes of change that many participants describe as healing. In the following section of this chapter, I illuminate participants' experience of healing within the processes of conflict transformation.

Personal Transformation: Healing

As discussed in previous chapters, the dominant Western worldview fragments many aspects of human experience. For example, healing is a human experience that is not well defined in, and seldom integrated into, Western theory and practice

of processing conflict (Gold 1993, p. 15). Conflict resolution and mediation training most often consign emotional and spiritual growth to the therapeutic professions such as medicine, psychology and psychotherapy (Gold 1993; Umbreit 1997). In contrast, healing is named as a central characteristic of both Indigenous and Western transformative processing of conflict.

Healing is a central characteristic of many forms of Indigenous approaches to processing conflict. Examples of Indigenous approaches that integrate healing within processing conflict can be found in the Navajo Harmony Ceremony (Yazzie 1995), the Cherokee Talking Circle (Garrett 1998), and Hawaiian Ho'oponpono (Shook & Kwan 1987).

Western transformative approaches to processing conflict also involve processes designed to heal the wounds of conflict. Gold (1993) and Umbreit (1997) are two scholars and practitioners of Western mediation who incorporate procedures designed to facilitate healing within conflict transformation.

In the participants' experience of conflict transformation, healing involves processes of profound personal change through a range of experiences. Participants describe healing experiences that evolve over long periods of time and include many different processes of change. They also describe sudden shifts, in which they are changed in a profound manner. In the following interview selection, one of the Aboriginal participants describes an experience in which he suddenly experienced a profound and lasting transformation:

> *It is one of the most profound experiences of my life. I know it was a powerful thing for me. I was in my late teens working as a liaison officer in Brisbane. Having grown up in a non-smoking, non-drinking family, [I] had developed certain approaches to people who drank and people who were drunk. In that particular position that I was in at that time, I had to deal with and work with people from a whole range of different backgrounds. I can't remember real clearly other than to know it was a powerful experience in that I felt as though both of us were interacting with a degree of guardedness: myself uncomfortable around people who are drunk and he resisting authority and perhaps resisting authority in the guise of someone much younger than him. But I maintained that kind of calmness that I think I have been developing over a long period of time, one of the blessings from my father. It was as though I stepped inside his space, either physically, and I can't remember whether it was an actual physical step inside his space, or it was some other process, but I know that it was like a flash of light and the next thing, we were interacting in a much different way. And I know that without recalling the detail now, that that relationship and the work I was able to do with him as a client at the time was much more effective and honest, trusting. It set down the basis of having stepped inside. From that point on, I was able to become more understanding*

of those who drank and my fear of those who drank essentially disappeared (Participant interview 1.9).

Healing processes in conflict transformation involve both sudden change and change that occurs gradually over a long period of time. In the following interview selection, one of the Aboriginal participants describes experiences of healing that combine an epiphany with incremental, gradual change. She is referring to the healing that takes place when non-Indigenous Australians begin to reconnect with land and with the original inhabitants of the Australian landscape.

> *To me, when I see a White Australian suddenly understand, and the self revelation, and something clicks into place, all of a sudden, he can say: 'Gee, I never thought of it. I understand a lot better than what I did before that these people are human beings and they have a spiritual and emotional attachment to land and it's part of them and I can begin to see it through different eyes.' Once that happens, that person I believe cannot go back to being the old colonial person they were before. I think when that self revelation happens, in a lot of cases, then a new person is born, they've taken, quite often in a small space of time, a giant step away from this old body, this old colonial mentality. they can leave it behind (Participant interview 13.24).*

Personal transformation also involves healing aspects of self that have been wounded or alienated from others. Participants maintain that they heal when they are allowed to tell their personal stories in an atmosphere of respect, in which others acknowledge the reality of their history and experience. Such healing can facilitate the processes of conflict transformation. Often, after individuals experience healing they are more capable of moving on into positive action. In the following interview selection, one of the Aboriginal participants describes the healing that occurred when she and one of her friends participated in a public ceremony for members of the Stolen Generations, Aboriginal children who were forcibly removed from their parents. During the ceremony this participant experienced a degree of healing through telling her story of being removed from her family.

> *On the 8th of March this year, you know when the Lord Mayor, marched, we walked from Musgrave Park to King George Square. There was about four to five thousand people there to welcome us. People who were directly involved in the Stolen Generation...I suppose cause he was the only one that ever acknowledged or said sorry to the Stolen Generation, you know.*
>
> *The way he did it, like he had a series of breakfasts, and I tried to get out to as many as possible, he had a lot of events in all the parks where... stolen kids were taken. And I remember helping...with the one at Teralba Park and that was a very moving experience for me and Amy and it sort of... it didn't heal us, but it sort of assisted us in the healing process and I've always said that to him. You know,... it healed a lot of wounds. I said there is still a lot there, but it healed a lot (Participant interview, p. 6).*

Participants in conflict transformation maintain that sharing their stories heals not only personal wounds, but also generational traumas. As explained in previous chapters, generational trauma involves the hurt that participants carry that was sustained by their parents, grandparents and ancestors. Particularly in cultures with cyclical conceptualisations of time in which past, present and future co-exist, traumas of past generations are felt as acutely as if they recently occurred (Hall 1983). In the following interview excerpt, one of the Aboriginal participants shares her experience of healing generational trauma as being a central aspect of her experience of conflict transformation.

> *And then I knew that this was not just about resolving conflict, this was also about healing. This was about healing an enormous amount of generational torture and trauma, of why my perceptions were created the way they were.*
>
> *I've shifted to a position that says how do I build bridges and that meant that I had to heal my own pain and frustration and... trauma around this that I've inherited from my parents, and my grandparents and from my great-grandparents and from my great-great-grandparents. From my ancestors who have been wounded... I had to go to a place of me strengthening my spirit and strengthening my heart if I am to truly be able to be a cultural translator and... get meaning to it, shared meaning to it, and from that place, we are able to then hopefully move to a position of saying: what can we do here that doesn't violate you from your place of knowing and certainly doesn't violate me from my place of knowing?*
>
> *And whether that's negotiation, I'm not sure, what I do know is that we may have different senses of belonging and responsibility to a certain lifestyle and for me, I guess, that's what transformation is about, how do I transform this into a position of understanding, and through that understanding to a position of self healing. And in that healing, have them take responsibility to insure they pass this on to whomever else that they touch places with (Participant interview 14.7-14.8).*

Summary

Healing is one of the central characteristics of participant's experiences in sustainable conflict transformation. Participants experience healing through participating in stories, ceremonies, and educational processes that allow them to share their experiences in an atmosphere of respect.

Increased awareness, strengthened identity and healing are central characteristics of participants' experiences of personal transformation within conflict transformation. These experiences have the potential to inform the discipline of conflict studies. In the following section, I discuss the implications of this theme in regard to the discipline of conflict studies.

Personal Transformation and Conflict Studies

The findings in this chapter indicate that personal transformation is an integral characteristic of conflict transformation. These findings describe healing of selves-in-community rather than isolated experiences that involve a sole autonomous being. Likewise, Indigenous and Western transformative approaches to conflict involve experiences of healing that strengthen ones' self-in-community.

Similarly to the experiences of the participants in this study, Indigenous approaches to transforming conflict involve healing self in relation to community. Many Indigenous metaphors of conflict, such as 'untangling the net', 'straightening the way' and 'mending the web' refer to the transformation of self-in-community (Walker 1998a). Within these Indigenous approaches to processing conflict, personal transformation involves healing the web of interconnections that sustains self-in-community (Huber 1993, p. 357). Indeed, Indigenous approaches to transforming conflicts in colonised societies are described as healing the web of community. In the following quotation, Hazelhurst (1999, p. xiii) describes the ways in which individual and community healing are linked within positive social change:

> Intellectually, spiritually, and socially, the kinds of practical and policy reforms which promote personal healing and community renewal represent one of the freshest, most exciting, and challenging of grounds upon which any social scientist, legal thinker, or political leader might advance. Those who lead the way at present often have no formal qualifications. They are not academics. Nor do they occupy positions of power and authority. Yet their discoveries and innovations are revolutionary in human and psycho-social terms. There is much we can learn from them.

Correspondingly, Western conflict transformation scholars describe personal growth within conflict transformation as involving a deepening awareness of self in context (Lederach 1997, p. 19). Western research regarding conflict transformation describes personal transformation as involving healing, increased self awareness and strengthened identity as related to self-in-community:

> Peacemaking embraces the challenge of personal transformation, of pursuing awareness, growth, and commitment to change at a personal level. In protracted, violent conflicts, this transformation involves grief and trauma work, as well as dealing with deep feelings of fear, anger, and bitterness that accompany accumulated personal and family loss. Peacemaking equally involves the task and priority of systemic

> transformation, of increasing justice and equality in our world (Lederach 1995, p. 20).

Bush & Folger (1994, p. 82), also describe the processes of personal transformation as one of the major desired outcomes of conflict transformation:

> Following from this view of conflict as an opportunity for human growth, the corresponding view of the ideal response to conflict is not problem-solving, but *transformation* of the individuals involved... If these capacities are realized, the response to conflict itself transforms individuals from fearful, defensive, and self-centred beings into confident, open, and caring ones... (Folger & Bush 1994, p. 16).

The findings in this thesis emphasise the importance of incorporating healing processes within conflict transformation. Conflicts between members of deeply divided societies are based on generations of anger, fear, mistrust and woundedness (Lederach 1997). Therefore, processes that hope to sustain conflict transformation must address healing the wounds incurred through these intense experiences. Nevertheless, healing is an aspect of human experience that is not often directly addressed in Western consensual processing of conflict such as mediation and conflict resolution. Possibly, healing is not well articulated within Western conflict resolution and mediation because the dominant processes privilege intellectual experience above emotional, spiritual and physical experience. In contrast, 'Healing is a complex phenomenon that has physical, spiritual, and emotional components' (Gold 1993, p. 58).

Similar to the participants' experience of healing and personal transformation, Western transformative approaches incorporate processes designed to heal the wounds of conflict. These processes include acknowledgement of participants' stories of their experience. In the following quotation, Lois Gold explains how transformative processes build opportunities for respect and expressions of concern which have the potential to heal the pain of previous experiences. She maintains that healing is one of the most powerful and unrealised aspects of Western consensual processing of conflict.

> A process that is respectful of each person and that encourages the expression of mutual respect and courtesy heals the ravages of hateful and angry diatribes...Perhaps the unrealized potency of mediation lies in the experience of a collaborative, constructive process, which...has an integrity and healing power (Gold 1993, p. 60).

Although Bush and Folger (1994, pp. 20, 83) do not use the terminology 'healing', they describe similar transformation that occurs when participants become aware of connections between them.

> ...it is striking when parties sometimes seem to reach, at least momentarily, an almost exalted state of both dignity and decency, as each gathers strength and then reaches out to the other. At such moments it seems that "the light goes on," that an illumination of human goodness seems to eclipse in importance everything else that happens ....in developing conscious awareness of other's common humanity, instead of regarding others as things to be used for one's own ends, the individual moves from a lower to a higher state of being. When individuals experience awareness and concern for both self and other, they rise to a higher, fully human existence.

There are strong similarities between the ethnopraxis expressed through the findings in this thesis, and Indigenous and transformative approaches to conflict. These similarities indicate that beneficial dialogue could be developed between these three approaches. Such dialogue could increase understanding of processes that facilitate healing and personal transformation within conflict processing.

Conclusion

Sustainable conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians involves transformation of the people involved. Personal transformation involves strengthened identity in regard to self-in-community. Experiences of personal transformation also involve increased self-awareness in regard to where participants fit within the processes of conflict and conflict transformation. Furthermore, personal transformation includes processes of healing the fear, grief and trauma that accompany the conflicts inherent in colonisation.

As discussed in this chapter, personal transformation is not an isolated experience, rather it is linked with community. In the following chapter, I share my story of transformation through participating with others in the processes of conflict transformation.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

MY EXPERIENCES OF CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION BETWEEN INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

Throughout my research I have participated in programs and projects designed to implement sustainable conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. My participation has enabled me to develop a more holistic understanding of the experience of others. As discussed in the methodology chapters, researcher participation is a central characteristic of methodologies based on paradigms of interconnectedness. In Indigenist methodologies, for example, researcher participation is an integral aspect of the holism required to implement Indigenous epistemologies (Begay & Maryboy 1998). Likewise, Western heuristic research, which aims to develop a deeper understanding of peoples' experience, includes '...actual autobiographical connections.' (Moustakas 1990, p. 14). Moustakas (1990, pp. 11-12) further explains that

> an unshakeable connection exists between what is out there, in its appearance and reality, and what is within me (the researcher) in reflective thought, feeling, and awareness.

Researcher participation is part of the co-creative process of paradigms based on interconnectedness. In describing a creative research paradigm, Peile (1994) depicts the researcher and the participants as interconnected parts of a larger process in which the researcher's experience both informs and is informed by the experiences of the participants. As I explained in Chapter Thirteen, many of the participants expressed ways in which they were transformed through the processes of conflict transformation. My experiences of participating in conflict transformation also changed me in fundamental ways.

In the five years that I have been in Australia, I have participated in many programs and projects designed to facilitate conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. I understand my participation in these activities, which are listed below, to be an integral part of the development of infrastructures designed to ameliorate the effects of colonisation.

- I was a member of a team of non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians who planned and implemented a Leadership in Reconciliation Training Program. Our

intent has been to facilitate the development of attitudes, skills and relationships necessary to sustain long term reconciliation.

- I taught small groups of students and gave seminars on decolonising research in an interdisciplinary subject entitled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives.
- With Aboriginal Australians, I co-facilitated a series of community workshops on conflict transformation and reconciliation.
- I facilitated workshops on Indigenous approaches to transforming conflict for the Queensland Justice Department.
- I worked with a team of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians to develop and implement anti-racism programs.
- With an Aboriginal facilitator, I co-facilitated cross-cultural awareness seminars at the University of Queensland.
- I presented seminars on Indigenous conflict transformation at two universities in Queensland.
- I developed this research thesis as part of the process of conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. I conceptualise this thesis as an example of conflict transformation in that it develops a story that synthesises Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians' experience as well as Indigenous and Western epistemologies (Duryea & Potts 1993).

As explained in previous chapters, the themes which form the web of the findings chapters were derived from a synthesis of my own experiences of conflict transformation, those of the Aboriginal and non-Indigenous participants, and written accounts of the experiences of other Australians. In the following sections of this chapter, I discuss my experience in relation to the six themes that characterise conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians: developing deep understanding; understanding and utilising the power of emotions; developing relationships; working together as equals to implement positive social change; balancing inequalities; and personal transformation.

Developing Deep Understanding

I began this research with a degree of understanding of Indigenous realities and of the impact of colonisation upon both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Nevertheless, as I participate in projects designed to transform conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, my understanding continues to deepen.

For example, my understanding of urban Aboriginal Australians' epistemology was deepened through a powerful experience regarding Aboriginal communication with the natural world. In this instance, I was on an excursion on Stradbroke Island with University of Queensland staff and students involved in a class entitled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Approaches to Knowledge. The subject was designed to develop a deeper understanding of Indigenous epistemologies. The Aboriginal lecturers had taken our group down to Main Beach to learn the traditional way of digging for pippis, a small shellfish that was one of the staple foods of the local Quandamooka people. We were learning to twist our feet in the sand at the edge of the incoming waves and when we felt a pippi with our feet, to scoop it up and wash it off in the incoming wave. I was concentrating on the difference between the sensation of a rock and a pippi beneath my feet and I only vaguely noticed that both of the Aboriginal lecturers were talking to a sea eagle who was hovering over us and crying. The lecturers kept talking to the eagle, saying, 'What's wrong, brother?' Within ten minutes, a Jeep came roaring to a stop beside us. A young man was driving and a young woman in the passenger seat held a female sea eagle in her lap. The eagle had become entangled in fishing line and was unable to move. The lecturers told the couple where they could access assistance for the female eagle and they drove away.

I think that until that point, I was unaware of my implicit assumptions regarding Aboriginal communication with the natural world. Through the experience with my colleagues and the eagle, I acknowledged that I had assumed communication with the natural world was only practised by Aborigines living in remote rural areas. I came to realise that urban, Aborigines with university qualifications also implement ways of knowing that integrate communication with the natural world.

My coming to understand the interconnections between aspects of Aboriginal worldview involves such relationships with the natural world, as well as with the land itself. In the following excerpt from my research journal I describe the interconnections between land, spirituality and relationship in my experience of conflict transformation:

> I was thinking of the role of land and the natural world in my thesis as the natural world is one of the 4 points on the Medicine wheel. In the reconciliation workshop on Sunday, I remember a very powerful point in which the Aboriginal elder said that the only way we would ever understand the spirituality of Aboriginal people was if we came to know, listen to, and have a relationship with the land because the land is where everything came from, spirituality arises from it.
>
> I was comparing this to another Aboriginal colleague's statement during the reconciliation dialogues that were broadcast over the radio: all we have (as Australians) in common is this land, and non-Indigenous people have forgotten sense of place (Research Journal p. 13).

My deepening levels of understanding involve deepening relationships. Through participating in conflict transformation with Aboriginal people, I have begun to develop a closer relationship with the land. As evidenced by Aboriginal participants' stories related in the other findings chapters, relationship with the land facilitates respectful relationships with the traditional owners of the land. In the following excerpt from my research journal, I share my experience of developing a deeper relationship with the land and with the Indigenous people of that land:

> One of the women of the Quandamooka people shared the story of a sacred site on Stradbroke Island. As we walked to the site, she quietly related the story that belonged to that place. Since that time, I have developed a relationship with the site. Now when I walk there, I sense the connection between the ancestors, our current generation and the generations to come. It is no longer simply a dramatically beautiful spot. It is alive with power, mystery, a history and a connection with the future of the people who live there (Research Journal p.20).

Through my participation in programs designed to transform conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, I came to understand that acknowledging and respecting Indigenous worldview does not mean freezing it into a essentialising framework which does not allow for creative change coming from Aboriginal peoples. Indeed, when non-Aboriginal people seek to protect the 'purity' of traditional Aboriginal worldview, they are perpetuating colonisation. In the following journal excerpt, I describe conflict that arose regarding use of Indigenous story. In this instance I was co-facilitating a conflict transformation workshop with two Aboriginal and one non-Indigenous facilitator.

> We were planning for the final day when a conflict arose regarding Indigenous use of story. The non-Indigenous facilitator wanted to retain the traditional way of using story, telling it and letting the Aboriginal participants share from their experience. The leading

> Aboriginal facilitator wanted to facilitate an explicit understanding of Indigenous use of story so that Aboriginal staff would be able to more appropriately respond to non-Indigenous people who did not understand Aboriginal ways of managing knowledge. She wanted the participants to be able to respond effectively to non-Indigenous statements such as, 'Oh, you are just yarning.' There was a certain amount of tension regarding the decision making process, with the Aboriginal facilitator maintaining that Aboriginal people had to retain the right to make decisions regarding how to implement their ways of knowing. She argued that for a non-Indigenous person to attempt to save traditional ways was just another way to colonise Aboriginal peoples (Research Journal p.14).

Summary

My experiences of participating in conflict transformation projects and programs include a continually deepening understanding on my part. I continue to develop a more holistic understanding of Aboriginal epistemologies and the ways in which they have been and continue to be silenced. Furthermore, the processes have increased my understanding of relationship with land and its role in conflict transformation.

Understanding and Utilising the Power of Emotions

I found the emotional aspects of conflict transformation to be powerful and moving experiences. In the following subsection, I discuss this emotional experience. In the second subsection, I discuss my experience of the effectiveness of using powerful emotions to facilitate the processes of conflict transformation.

Understanding emotions

Through participating in conflict transformation in Australia, I have become more deeply aware of the emotional experiences of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. In the dominant Australian culture, the emotional aspects of experience are often silenced through the predominantly dispassionate factual media presentations of Indigenous issues and the scholarly jargon of academic texts (Christie 1993). The suppression of emotional experience can lull the people involved into a false sense of progress. Indeed, I often feel jolted by the intense emotional reaction of my Aboriginal colleagues. Through participating in conflict transformation with Aboriginal Australians, I have become aware of the depth and intensity of their emotional experience in response to the processes of colonisation.

I also feel shame that at times I have allowed myself to become oblivious to the emotional experience of my Aboriginal friends and colleagues. In the following excerpt from my research journal, I recount an experience in which I came to a deeper understanding of the ways in which emotional experience is impacted by previous experiences of colonisation, and how these issues impact upon conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

> One of my Aboriginal colleagues had invited me to sit in on a lecture for international students who are attending a two week cultural study tour at the university. He and another Aboriginal lecturer arrived at my door and we rushed off to the presentation. I was not aware at the time they were planning to do the lecture, and I still had my head full of my thesis and my mind a million miles away as I followed them into the next building. There was no one in the room where the students were supposed to be, so we all trooped off to the office to ask the receptionist the location of the class. I was still very preoccupied and not even standing close to the counter or making eye contact with anyone, and all of a sudden, the Aboriginal lecturer hissed in my ear, "Did you see that? She (the receptionist) looked right at you and asked if you wanted anything. She didn't look at me." I felt acutely aware of race privilege, that I would be the person addressed because I appeared to be white. However, I was the student, not the staff member, and furthermore, I was giving no clues that I was interested in information of any kind... I wondered what my Aboriginal colleague has to go through on a regular basis to make her that upset. I began to become acutely aware of the response of others in similar situations and how such experiences exacerbate conflict between the two groups (Research journal Jan. 9, 1999).

I have also had similar experiences to those described by Henry Reynolds (1999) in which he describes intense emotional reactions on the part of Indigenous Australians over what many non-Indigenous Australians would consider to be seemingly 'insignificant occurrences'. I have had such intense anger directed at me by some Aboriginal Australians that at times I could not find a way to work through it. I realise that I may have unwittingly provoked the anger by some display of outsider ignorance of acceptable behaviour, or by my own internalised colonialism. Nevertheless, at times I have felt extremely discouraged, drained, and unfairly accused of being uncaring in regard to Indigenous Australians.

Utilising the Power of Emotions

I have also experienced the power of emotional expression to promote change and to heal alienation. In workshops that I have facilitated regarding conflict transformation and reconciliation, I have shared stories of research participants'

experience of conflict transformation. These stories express the emotional aspects of participants' experience. The stories frequently engender an emotional response on the part of the listeners. Immediate responses vary. Some non-Indigenous Australians express discomfort with the stories and express a desire to return to an analytical framework of change. Others are angry and say a lot of the stories express primitive beliefs and superstitions. However, some listeners begin to talk about their emotional response to what they have heard and what they might do so that other Indigenous Australians do not continue to experience the same painful experiences.

Indeed, in my experience of facilitating conflict transformation workshops, it seems that the people who are willing to experience their emotional response to the stories are the ones who are able to move ahead into supporting positive social change. My experience in this regard parallels that of others in conflict transformation. Lederach (1997) explains that healing within conflict transformation is a paradox in that feeling and expressing pain over past occurrences enables the people involved to move beyond it to repair and rebuild relationships.

Developing Relationships

Through participation in conflict transformation, I have built many working relationships with non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. I have also developed close friendships with some of them. Through my participation in projects designed to support sustainable conflict transformation, I experienced the importance of developing respectful relationships by working *with* people rather than working *for* their benefit. In the following story, I explore the importance of relationship within conflict transformation. Intellectual analyses alone are not enough to facilitate the changes in attitudes and behaviours needed to transform conflict in colonised societies. In my experience, relationships are required to facilitate change. In the following excerpt from my research journal, I write about a racism workshop I was co-facilitating. During the morning session of the workshop, the non-Indigenous participants expressed a growing understanding in regard to respectful relationship with Indigenous Australians. However many of them had not as yet developed relationships with Aboriginal Australians. In the afternoon session an Aboriginal co-facilitator joined our team and it became

obvious that a gap existed between the participants' intellectual comprehension and their ability to respond respectfully in relating to the Aboriginal facilitator.

> I facilitated a workshop on racism on Saturday with a non-Indigenous and an Aboriginal co-facilitator. It was very interesting in that the group, a diverse mob of 20 participants who want to become leaders in reconciliation, made some profound discoveries through the activities presented in the morning regarding positive anti-racism behaviours. They articulated the importance of not expecting one Indigenous person to have all the answers (acknowledging what pressure that places the Indigenous person under); of getting on the same level as the Indigenous people, in solidarity, not standing over them, trying to improve the situation; of the importance of just being there, of enveloping Aboriginal Australians in relationship rather than in fixing problems; and of the importance of interacting on a heart level.
>
> However, in the afternoon, when the Aboriginal facilitator came, the same people who had espoused appropriate behaviours did not put them into practice. Some of the participants asked the Aboriginal facilitator to speak for all Aborigines of all eras (including pre-colonial). One of the non-Indigenous participants made suggestions about what Aboriginal peoples need to do to improve their situation, implying non-Indigenous peoples knew how to fix the problems. This activity pointed out to me the chasm that sometimes exists between our intellectual knowledge and our behaviours of positive change.
>
> One of the most profound outcomes of the workshop for me was when the one Aboriginal participant responded. He was speaking to the concern of another participant who was worried about her aggressive responses toward racist behaviour she encountered when she was trying to work in solidarity with Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal man said, 'You know you don't always have to do something. You can just be there, be with us. Some of the most highly regarded White people in the community are just there for us, they don't have to say anything, or do anything, they are just there. And that means a lot to us. We know who they are, and we understand what they are doing.' To me, it seemed he was stressing the value and importance of relationship as compared to technique (Research Journal p. 12).

Working Together

I found it challenging to working together with Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians to transform conflict. Often the efforts of which I were a part were not as effective as I would have liked for them to be. In the following subsection I discuss my experiences of non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians working together as equals to transform conflict. I then discuss my experiences of supporting positive social change at personal and societal levels, including responses to both

overt and quiet racism. In the final subsection, I discuss participation as a central aspect of conflict transformation.

Working Together as Equals

For a year and a half, I was directly involved in the planning and implementation of a program designed to train non-Indigenous Australians in effective methods of implementing reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. A group of non-Indigenous Australians worked with Indigenous consultants to set up a series of workshops and experiences that would place participants in service projects requested by Indigenous communities. Thus, our goal was to increase participation of non-Indigenous Australians in sustainable reconciliation. I understand that the group was working to 'educate their own mob' rather than expecting Aboriginal Australians to educate non-Indigenous Australians. Nevertheless, even though all of us had experience in working with Aboriginal Australians, I think at times we worked in ways that did not equally acknowledge and respect Aboriginal worldview. I remember clearly one experience in which we were making arrangements to contact Aboriginal communities to see if they would be willing to have a group of non-Indigenous Australians visit their community and spend time with them. The committee was making plans for one of the Aboriginal consultants to travel North to consult with the designated Aboriginal communities. One of the Aboriginal consultants explained privately to me: 'I've been given a schedule that includes more than one community group in a day, then moving on to the next organisation or community. You can't just arrive in the community, knock on the door, and ask if they want this group of Whitefellas to come. First you sit and yarn and then you might have a feed up on the hill or by the river and then you get around to asking about the program and visiting the community.' In contrast, our planning group had come with a suggested schedule that more closely resembled Western ways of arranging schedules and planning dialogues.

It is my experience that we were trying to work together as equals, but that we had implicit assumptions that often got in the way. To work together as equals would include acknowledgement and respect of Indigenous process and worldview. It seems to me that we were not sufficiently proactive in regard to differences in worldview regarding time, pace and appropriate behaviour.

Working Together: Supporting Positive Change at Personal and Social Levels

Through my participation in conflict transformation involving Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians, I worked to assist in transforming racism within Australian society. Although the overt racist discourse that I experienced through these efforts was distasteful, my experience of quiet racism was even more distressing in that it was more widespread and often expressed by people 'of good intention'.

Responding to Overt Racism

Throughout my research project, I frequently found myself in the position of responding to racist comments from total strangers. Perhaps my American accent drew their attention; they often asked me where I was from and what I was doing here. When I told them what I was researching, many of them proceeded to tell me 'the way it really was'. Many of them had never spoken to an Aboriginal Australian, nor developed a relationship with them, but they wanted to set me straight. They would explain how Aboriginal people could not be trusted, were out to get all the money they could and how they received unfair, special treatment. After listening, I would usually share my experiences of working with Aboriginal Australians, thereby providing a contradiction to the stereotypes they expressed. Most often when I questioned them about their relationships with Aboriginal people, they indicated that they had none. They were basing their comments on experiences related to them by someone else or on comments expressed in the media.

Response to 'Quiet' Racism

Through my participation in conflict transformation, I came to understand quiet racism as more insidious than the blatant talk shows and the rhetoric of extremists. Frequently I experienced quiet racism from friends and colleagues who generally are kind, considerate and generous people. In the following excerpt from my research journal, I explore one of my experiences of quiet racism.

> Over the weekend, I gained some insight into how deeply ingrained racist sentiments are in the thought and behaviour of many Queenslanders. I asked three colleagues of mine if they knew about any good anti-racism programs in the public schools. One is a guidance officer, one a teacher and the other a special needs officer.

The guidance officer said they frequently made suggestions for cross cultural awareness training in the schools and invariably, the response from principals has been, 'Oh, we don't have a problem with racism.' So this guidance officer has not been able to instigate any programs.

The educator dealing with special needs said that they didn't have any programs for racism because they only had 6 Aborigines in their school, and so they didn't need one. (I thought,'Maybe that's why they only have 6!' What do numbers have to do with racism? My son's school only had one Aboriginal student and many of the high school students expressed a lot of racist stereotypes in regard to his many 'special privileges.' Even though there was only one Aboriginal student at my son's high school, obviously there was a need for anti-racism education).

The teacher said they didn't think the problem of racial taunts was any worse for Aboriginal students than it was for any other students. When I explained that in my experience and the experience of my Aboriginal friends and colleagues it was, and that Aboriginal people said it was, the teacher responded by saying that I was constantly around university people who 'thought in those ways' but that ordinary Aboriginal people just want to live normal lives, not any different from Whites. Furthermore the teacher claimed that Aborigines are apathetic about their own cultural expression. This teacher had been involved in a cultural heritage project at the school. The teacher stressed that was not their area of interest, but that was how allocated funds had to be spent. The teacher could not find any Aboriginal people in the area with the extensive knowledge required to complete the project. When my husband remarked on how much of that knowledge was lost when children and families were removed from their land, again my colleagues' response was that the Aborigines were just apathetic. The teacher also said they could not understand why Aboriginal children would need special protection from racial abuse, saying the Aboriginal students already have a teacher's aide just for the 12 Aboriginal children in the school, and the aide is not allowed to work with any other children, although other children in the school have far more pressing needs. The teacher also remarked that Aboriginal students already got special tutoring. I felt like my colleague was saying I was just a radical, and that normal Aborigines just want to be left alone to live like Whites live, and they didn't need anything special in regard to racist behaviour being directed toward them at school. To me these remarks seem to be an example of 'quiet' racism in which non-Indigenous people implement policies and procedures that ignore Aboriginal Australians' stories of their experience of racism. The remarks also seem to indicate that if Aborigines don't know or care about traditional knowledge, they aren't real Aborigines, just assimilated Australians.

These exchanges also made me realise how important is the role of increasing positive perceptions of Aboriginal people and what support Aboriginal Australians might need within public schools in order to be accepted and respected as well as to perform on an equal footing with non-Aboriginal Australians (Research Journal p. 7).

I found engaging in dialogue regarding racism to be exhausting. I'm not sure in which instances my experience may have made a positive difference. Many of the people I will never see again. The people with whom I have a long-term relationship may find their racism altered more by their experience than by my sharing my experience. Nevertheless, I continue to share my experiences which contradict the myths and stereotypes that perpetuate and exacerbate racism.

I also found that working together with Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians brought my unacknowledged racism into my conscious awareness. I realised that to a great extent I had internalised stereotypes of urban Aboriginal people as victims. As I came to personally know more Aboriginal Australians, I found many strong, powerful urban Aborigines such as those depicted in Elaine Darling's (2000) book, *They Spoke Out Pretty Good* which describes Aboriginal women who were powerful forces in implementing positive social change.

I also realised I had stereotyped rural Aboriginal Australians as simple people of the land. As I met more rural Aboriginal Australians, I found many who were highly literate, articulate people. When I visited a remote homestead in one of my Aboriginal friend's home country, I found that his father was a devotee of Chinese Opera and when not working the land or the railroad, spend many hours listening to the operas on his short wave radio. Through these and many other experiences, I realised that I cannot place blame on 'those racists' but that I too have internalised racist myths and stereotypes that I must acknowledge and work to change.

Working Together: Participation as a Central Aspect of Conflict Transformation

Through participating in conflict transformation, I came to understand the importance of working *with* the participants in my research. I don't think I was totally successful in treating them as equals. However, I did endeavour to give equal consideration to their feedback when I was developing my findings. Nevertheless, putting equal weight on what the participants said about my research was neither easy nor comfortable. In the following excerpt from my research journal, I describe the challenge that I had in researching *with* the participants rather than conducting research on them:

I just had an email from _____, requesting an interview to discuss my research findings. When the message flashed on my computer screen, anxiety rose up in my throat. What would she think of what I had said? There was so much to say in such a little space. How vulnerable I feel to expose myself to the response of the people I interviewed. I could have buried their information in my themes and not exposed myself to this risk. She must have sensed I might be anxious because she said it was not to critique, but to talk about some other things I might want to consider. And at the same time it is very exciting to me that she would give her time, when she is so busy with land councils and with her work at the university. I look forward to my thesis becoming stronger and more useful through dialogue with the participants and at the same time I am frightened. I am only used to my academic work being scrutinised within academia, where I usually get quite good reviews. The people living out the processes on a daily basis may not be so impressed. Is that the point, to impress people? Or to learn new ways of developing information that are less structurally violent, have more integrity and communicate among those people involved... I am walking in those turbulent waters of cross-cultural communication. Although we are both Indigenous and have a feel for each other's approach, we come from quite different backgrounds and cultures.

Synchronicity: I just left the computer to pick up the reading I was doing on methodology and this was the next paragraph after I wrote this journal entry: 'scrutiny of the research activity is no longer limited to a disciplinary peer group. This enlargement of scrutiny demands narratives which are also subject to the scrutiny, inspection, and assent of the researched' (Smith 1999). (Research Journal p. 20.)

Summary

Participation in conflict transformation facilitates personal transformation. Although I was not always as effective as I would have liked to be, I changed a great deal by working together with Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians on projects designed to build infrastructures to support systemic change. I became much more aware of inequalities that I could work to redress. I also developed a deeper awareness of systemic and quiet racism and my role in redressing them.

Balancing Inequalities

My experience of conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians involves working toward balancing inequalities in expression of Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies. As explained in previous chapters, Indigenous worldview has been suppressed through the processes of colonisation, resulting in inequalities in opportunities for Indigenous peoples to

practice their own ways of knowing. In my experience, this inequality of expression both perpetuates and exacerbates conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Non-Indigenous Australians often consider Aboriginal worldview to be an impractical esoteric topic, particularly in the context of formal research and public policy. In this section, I will share some of the experiences that I had in regard to unequal opportunities for Indigenous Australians to express and function within their worldview in the broader community.

Many non-Indigenous Australians who make policy and implement programs regarding Indigenous Australians are unaware of the differences between Indigenous and Western worldview. This 'willing ignorance' (which is itself a mark of race privilege) results in procedures and policies that exacerbate conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. In the following excerpt drawn from my research journal, I share my experience of working with one department of the Queensland Government. The department's dismissal of Indigenous worldview as a serious consideration in policy development regarding Aboriginal Australians blocked the communication that my colleagues and I had hoped to facilitate.

> A few days ago, I assisted in the facilitation of a workshop in a major government department in the central business district. The two main facilitators were a non-Indigenous scholar and an Aboriginal elder and philosopher. My part of the workshop was to introduce the participants to the concept of the out-of-awareness aspects of worldview (in contrast to the obvious differences in surface culture), to present concepts regarding conceptualisations of time, relationship to land and relationships with people. From there, my non-Indigenous colleague was going to tie that concept to conflict transformation within Australia and the Aboriginal elder was going to speak from her perspective as an Aboriginal Australian. I had been speaking only a little while before the head of the department angrily commented that the Western worldview had done just fine for over 200 years, thank you very much and there seemed no need to modify that. He blocked the consideration of the role of worldview in developing policy regarding Indigenous Australians. His refusal to listen was so complete that the rest of the workshop was ineffective, as it was based on understanding the deep out-of-awareness aspects of worldview.
>
> At one point, the head of the department argued that worldview was an ineffective concept because young Aboriginal people held different values and priorities than older Aboriginal people, and if his department was supposed to be sensitive, then who was he going to listen to: Aboriginal youth, or Aboriginal elders?
>
> I agreed that generational conflicts are often a consideration in protracted conflict situations such as are found in colonisation. Yet the

> head of the department was not willing to listen to concepts of self-in-community which are part of Aboriginal worldview. Such considerations might have led to some productive thinking and planning in regard to generational conflicts within the Aboriginal community and within their department (Journal entry p.22).

The second example of redressing inequalities in expressions of Indigenous worldview relates to my attempts to implement Indigenist epistemologies within formal academic research. Other Native scholars emphasise the importance of integrating Indigenist epistemologies into formal academic research (Cajete 2000; Duran & Duran 1995; Begay & Maryboy 1998; Myer 1998a; Rigney 1998; Smith 1999; Whelshula 1999). In David Begay's and Nancy Maryboy's (1998, p. 71) doctoral dissertation, they challenge university requirements that research be conducted within Western paradigms which are not compatible with 'the holistic native mind'.

I experienced the importance of voicing Indigenous worldview within formal research methodologies during a Work-In-Progress Seminar that I gave at the University of Queensland. It seemed to me that a presentation in which I analysed the use of Indigenous epistemologies in formal academic research would increase lecturers' and other doctoral students' intellectual understanding. Yet a presentation based solely on intellectual analysis did not seem to me to be a particularly effective expression of Indigenous epistemologies which integrate intellect, emotion, body and spirit (Begay & Maryboy 1998, pp. 90-93). I decided that in facilitating a deeper understanding of Indigenous methodologies, I needed to involve the other postgraduate scholars and staff members in an experience of Indigenous epistemology, specifically Indigenous use of story. Through this approach, I hoped to facilitate a holistic experience of the process. Begay and Maryboy (1998, p. 71), express similar sentiment in their doctoral thesis based on Indigenous epistemologies:

> When one tries to catagorize native knowledge through a western lens, it becomes fragmented... the multiple interconnected levels of knowledge become trivialized, marginalized and lose their rich interplay of significance. They become what earlier anthropologists have loosely termed "folk tradition".

In the departmental seminar in which I shared my research findings, I facilitated the expression of Indigenous use of story which honours the interconnected aspects of experience. In the following excerpt from my research

journal, I describe the process I implemented, as well as the response from lecturers and other postgraduates. I think the response to my presentation is an indication of the effectiveness of Indigenous epistemologies, particularly Indigenous use of story, in facilitating a more holistic understanding of research participants' experience. Furthermore, both the comments from the Indigenous staff and students, and the response of the non-Indigenous staff illuminate the extent to which Indigenous epistemologies have been silenced within formal academic research.

> I gave a work in progress seminar today... before I gave it, I realised I needed to involve people in the process I was using, (not just talk about it). I asked the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit of the university if they had an Indigenous student that might be willing to read the stories I had collected from Indigenous Australians. Kathy, (who shares my office) is a descendent of white settler Australians, and she agreed to read the stories of the White Australians. And I shared what I learned from the stories (which was reflected in the thematic framework)...
>
> One of the staff members from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit, recruited an Aboriginal TAFE student... to read the stories. She donated her time to come and review the stories and then read them orally during the work in progress seminar.
>
> The TAFE student was quite pleased with the opportunity to participate. She said she had heard similar stories from the people in her community and that she was eager to share them with a wider audience. She expressed her interest in both the content and the methodology of the research. The Aboriginal staff member said his department wants to support Indigenous ways of knowing and was pleased with the way in which I was sharing Indigenous story. I was pleased that I was able to model the process of deep knowing from story, rather than to just talk about how I approached it in my methodology (Research Journal p.11).

The work in progress presentation seemed to be effective in communicating participants' experience to the audience in a holistic manner. It seemed to me that the response of staff and research scholars encompassed more than intellectual comprehension. Some of the staff and students listening to the stories said that they were moved to tears. At the end of the time allotted for my seminar, I asked if the listeners would like to ask questions (which is the standard format) or if they would prefer that we share more stories with them. The listeners unanimously agreed that they would rather share more stories. Both emotional and intellectual responses are illuminated in the following comments from staff and students, as recorded in my research journal.

> My supervisor said she had heard good reviews on the presentation that I gave on Friday, both from staff and students. The director of postgraduate studies in the department asked me if I would be willing to contribute a chapter on my methodology to a text they were thinking of putting together on innovative methods in social science research.
>
> Again, I received many positive comments from staff members and postgraduate students. I am not recording these to sit on my laurels (although they do feel pretty cushy in comparison to sitting out on a limb, which is how my position is usually described) but to consider more deeply what they were trying to say.
>
> One of the post-graduate researchers, sent me an email thanking me for my presentation and remarking how it made her more conscious of the people and their stories that underpin our research and how easy it is to lose sight of that in the analysis. Another lecturer spoke on how it had moved her and that she found the presentation style effective. One of my supervisors dropped by and said he kept hearing great reviews on the presentation and how it seemed worth the risk I took in trying a new style of presentation. Another lecturer caught me in the hall and spoke of how touched she was; that in the middle of my presentation she had an insight that worldview and philosophy were impacting the research she is currently doing with elderly Aboriginal people, and that perhaps the questions she was asking from her worldview were just not very meaningful for the Aboriginal elders. She said she thought my work was an excellent piece of research in that it had something to contribute to people working across cultures in disciplines other than conflict resolution.
>
> It feels good to see that my thesis is working as a form of conflict transformation as it communicates between the cultures (Research journal Nov. 11, 1999).

Through this work in progress seminar and through my other research activities, I have endeavoured to implement Indigenist epistemologies within formal academic research. As explained in Chapter Seven, the principles upon which I based my methodology are supported by other Indigenist scholars and by Western scholars of emergent research. Nevertheless, I have been told many times by a wide range of university staff in several departments that a doctoral thesis must be set within Western paradigms or it is not a Ph.D. These staff members have explained that a doctoral degree is a ticket of admission to a Western academic culture and must therefore be based within Western paradigms. Nevertheless, as a statement against cognitive imperialism, I have set my research within an Indigenist paradigm and have endeavoured to analyse the points at which Indigenist and emergent Western paradigms support each other. Valid social science research must

acknowledge the reality of the people involved in the research (Cajete 2000). Furthermore, valid research involving Indigenous peoples must include respect for and acknowledgement of their worldview and epistemologies.

> Qualitative researchers argue that people's perceptions should be the focus of analysis... we must understand those perceptions if we want to understand human behavior: what people think about the world influences how they act in it (Begay & Maryboy 1998, p. 36).

Research that does not acknowledge the reality of the people involved produces results that are skewed through the lenses of the researcher. Such research ignores crucial differences in worldview, perpetuating and even exacerbating inequalities in opportunities to function within one's own worldview.

Through my experience in addressing inequalities regarding expression of Indigenous epistemologies, I have come to understand how infrequently Indigenous epistemologies are voiced within doctoral theses. Indeed, many Native and Indigenist scholars experience attempts to silence Indigenous epistemologies within formal academic research. As discussed in Chapter Five, Eduardo Duran, who is of Apache and Pueblo Indian descent, argues for the integration of Indigenous ways of knowing within academic research, maintaining that institutions of higher learning must change and 'accept knowledge from differing cosmologies as valid in their own right, without their having to adhere to a separate cultural body for legitimacy' (Duran and Duran 1995, p. 6).

Summary

Within my participation in formal research experience and community projects of facilitating conflict transformation, I have experienced the inequalities of opportunities for Indigenous peoples to function within their worldview and implement their own epistemologies. Throughout my work in Australia, I have endeavoured to bring these inequalities into conscious awareness as well as to address them by implementing Indigenous methodologies within my research and practice. In the following section, I discuss the ways in which I was personally transformed by participating in the processes of conflict transformation.

Personal Transformation

As discussed in Chapter Thirteen, the experience of conflict transformation involves transformation of the people involved. Indeed, I have been transformed in lasting ways through my participation in conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. In this section I first discuss my experiences of increased self-awareness of the white race privilege that is sometimes accorded me. I then discuss my experiences of healing through participation in conflict transformation.

Self Transformation: Increased Awareness of White Race Privilege

As I participate in conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, I have increased my awareness of the ways in which I have benefited and continue to benefit from colonisation. Firstly, although I am of mixed ancestry, I have white skin. I have many Cherokee great-grandparents and grandparents, yet most people of the dominant Western culture immediately assign me an identity of 'white'. As such, I am often accorded unearned privileges.

I have had several experiences of white race privilege within Australia. For example, when I expressed my desire to pursue residency in Australia, an Australian civic leader told me that I could use him as a reference because they needed people like me who were the 'right colour' and spoke the 'right language'.

Through my increased level of relationship with Indigenous people, I have become much more aware of my usual level of privilege. When I am with Indigenous people who are easily identified as Indigenous, I often lose the white race privilege that I am afforded when I am alone or in the company of other people who appear to be white. When I am with obviously Indigenous peoples, I often experience harassment, invasive comments, and derision. For example, when I go for coffee with male friends who have white skin, none of my other friends or acquaintances comment. However, in some instances when I have gone for coffee with obviously Aboriginal male friends, other friends and acquaintances have inquired after my welfare and questioned me regarding the whereabouts of my partner. Lillian Holt (2000), Aboriginal scholar and activist, maintains that if one wants to learn about the level of racism and race privilege in Australia, all they have

to do is hang out with Aboriginal people for a while. This has certainly been my experience.

My self awareness regarding my participation in, and battle against, colonisation and the ensuing racism continues to increase as I become more closely affiliated with other Indigenous communities. In July and August of 2000, I received a grant from the University of Queensland to research Native American and First Nations epistemologies. In the following excerpt from my research journal, I share the story of an experience in which I encountered racism based on my visibly Indigenous travelling companions.

> I was in Montana, researching Indigenous epistemologies and I left to drive to the Four Worlds Institute in Lethbridge, Canada. Two young Blackfeet men who were friends needed a ride to Lethbridge and I volunteered to take them on my way to do research at the institute.
>
> I have passed across the Canadian border several times in my life and have never had any difficulties. I also never attributed this freedom to my white skin, but now I do. When I crossed over the Canadian border with the Blackfeet men, the border guard said we would have to pull over and go inside. We were separated and I was taken into a room and grilled regarding my background, my job, my criminal record, and my purpose for being in Canada. After a while, when the investigator could find nothing against me in the computer records, she stamped my pass, told me to turn it in at the office and proceed into Canada. I went downstairs, passed my paperwork across the desk and started to leave. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw the young man who was operating the checkpoint frown and call one of his superiors over to him. The supervisor then came hurrying out and commanded me to go over and stand by my Blackfeet friends. I told him I was not comfortable with being separated from my permission papers, which I had already surrendered, unless he was going to allow me to proceed into Canada. He abruptly told me to shut up and stand outside. Then he came outside and grilled all three of us again. Finally he apologised and said they had to be sure everything was okay. When we got in our vehicle and drove away, the young men explained to me that it is always like that when they cross the border, that they hate going across the border. I realised that my white skin afforded me the unearned privilege of passing freely where I wanted to go without undue interference (Research Journal p. 24).

Through experiences such as those described in the preceding paragraphs, I have increased my level of self-awareness in relation to my position in a colonised society. This awareness has led to my increased commitment to working to ameliorate the effects of colonisation through increasing my participation in the processes of conflict transformation.

Self Transformation: Healing through Participation in Conflict Transformation

Through my participation in conflict transformation, I have experienced the beginnings of healing the wounds of colonisation. People who wish to facilitate conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples must be willing to be healed in regard to their participation in colonisation. In the following quotation, an Aboriginal Australian involved in community healing explains the importance of healing one's own wounds of colonisation before attempting to assist others.

> Heal yourself, please. Deal with the issue of what your people have done to our people, what your ancestors have done to our ancestors, then we might be able to help one another. Unless you are healed, don't bother to come in and work with us because you'll only make us worse (Koolmatrie & Williams 2000, p. 164).

Healing is an integral aspect of Indigenous conflict transformation in which people begin to heal by first acknowledging 'unresolved, unconscious pain' (Koolmatrie & Williams 2000, p. 164). Facilitators of Indigenous conflict transformation are expected to have worked on their own healing, as Huber (1993) describes in her explanation of the development of the Medicine Wheel Model of transforming conflict.

My experience of healing through conflict transformation is complex. As a descendent of both the colonisers and the colonised, I experience the effects of colonisation on both Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of my family. Thus my experience of healing through conflict transformation is twofold. Firstly, my experience involves acknowledging the pain of the alienation that exists between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities from which I come. In response, I have chosen to participate in projects that reconnect Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. As someone who has also benefited socially and economically from colonisation, I have chosen to become involved in programs and projects designed to provide some degree of recompense for the benefits that my non-Indigenous ancestors gained from their possession of appropriated Indigenous lands.

Summary

My experience of personal transformation within the processes of conflict transformation involves increased awareness of the interconnections between my experiences of accorded white race privilege and my experiences of racism. I have also experienced healing some of my own wounds of colonisation through working with Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians who are endeavouring to transform conflict.

Conclusion

My experience of conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is a process that involves:

- development of deep understanding of different realities, and the effects of colonisation, particularly on expression of Indigenous worldview and epistemologies
- understanding the emotional aspects of people's experience of colonisation and utilising the power of those emotions to facilitate change
- working together in ways that strive for relationships of equality
- developing respectful relationships with the people involved and with the natural world
- building an infrastructure of programs and projects that are designed to redress the inequalities brought about by colonisation
- profound personal change through participating in holistic experiences of conflict transformation which integrate intellect, emotion, spirit and the natural world.

I also have a growing awareness that conflict transformation is a long-term process encompassing decades and generations. The conflicts that characterise colonised Australia have been going on for over 200 years. Conflict transformation in Australia requires immediate action to address conflicts such as racism and unequal opportunities. In addition, sustainable conflict transformation involves the implementation of an infrastructure of programs and projects designed to sustain conflict transformation over the long term (Lederach 1997).

In one of the colonisation workshops which I attended, Lyn Dunstone, a non-Indigenous Australian, explained that she had over thirty years experience in relationship building, close friendships and implementing social change with Aboriginal Australians and she still came to the realisation at times that there were significant aspects of the process that she still did not get right. She maintains that conflict transformation is a life-long journey. In the following interview selection,

one of the Aboriginal participants in this research talks about the Aboriginal conceptualisation of the time it will take to properly address decolonisation and transformation of conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. She is describing how she explains long term proper change to non-Indigenous Australians.

> *...just imagine, what kind of society do you want in about a thousand year's time... I think they think ...we're trying to humour them, to so they can understand things. And in a way it is, but... really they don't take it fully in about what that actually means, ... because they... just can't think beyond that immediate thing, you know? Their life or the life of their children. That's what we were saying too, is that we want to be really careful about that: taking on any kind of proselytising role, converting role, and in a way it doesn't really... count if it works like that, to me personally it doesn't, if they are converted into it, do you know what I mean? ... from a Murri point of view, it... becomes a normal gradually, it's a gradualism... and after a while... of living in this country... hundreds of generations, well, at least another couple of hundred years, they will see that, you know what I mean? To... think and act in a certain way maybe that's a very long time whereas the converting kind or proselytising kind of missionary style doesn't really. If we want long term kind of stuff to happen, you know, in a proper Indigenous way, then we have to take that long term view and not the short term missionary way. Cause that's the thing we try to say to... white fellows (Participant interview 11.11).*

Such Indigenous conceptualisations of the time required to effect sustainable changes in conflict are mirrored by conflict transformation scholar Lederach (1997). In writing about sustainable conflict transformation, he explains that we must begin to think in terms of taking a long-term view of transforming conflict.

> We must think about the healing of people and the rebuilding of the web of their relationships in terms relative to those that it took to create the hatred and violence that has divided them (Lederach 1997, p. 78).

I have come to understand my participation in conflict transformation as one part of a complex web that stretches into the past and the future, drawing on the experiences of those who came before us and laying foundations for those yet to come.

In this chapter I have shared my experience of conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. As explained in the methodology chapters, self-reflexivity on the part of the researcher is an integral part of research methodologies based on conceptualisations of interconnectedness.

In the next and final chapter, I draw conclusions regarding sustainable conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, provide suggestions for further research, and touch on the limitations of this research.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

CONCLUSION

> We must think about the healing of the people and the rebuilding of the web of their relationships (Lederach 1997, p. 78)

In this thesis I have illuminated processes of sustainable conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. The themes discussed in the findings chapters describe transformative processes which heal the web of interconnections damaged through colonisation. The ethnopraxis of this thesis, the local knowledge and practice of transforming conflict, represented in the findings informs current theory and practice of consensual conflict processing, revealing both problematic and promising issues regarding Western methods of consensual conflict processing.

In the first section of this chapter, I draw conclusions regarding the ways in which Western problem solving methodologies are inadequate to address conflicts between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. I then discuss the ways in which conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in colonised societies may be addressed through conflict transformation. In the final section, I discuss my use of Indigenist epistemologies and methodologies, suggesting limitations and pointing to other research that could further develop knowledge of conflict transformation.

Australian Ethnopraxis and Western Conflict Resolution

The ethnopraxis discussed in this thesis highlights the limitations of Western problem solving models of conflict resolution, particularly in their inability to deal with protracted conflicts between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous peoples in colonised countries. In this section I discuss the ways in which Western problem solving models are problematic in their inadequate attention to: building and strengthening interpersonal relationships; acknowledgement of alternate worldviews; and the broader societal processes that are needed to transform conflict.

The findings of this thesis describe building and repairing interpersonal relationships between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians as integral aspects of conflict transformation. In contrast, the dominant problem solving models of conflict resolution do

not directly address building or strengthening interpersonal relationships. This omission is problematic in conflicts in deeply divided societies, which are characterised by continued violence, fear, anger, alienation and mistrust (Lederach 1997). This thesis indicates that sustainable methods of processing conflict in colonised societies must involve processes of building and restoring interpersonal relationships, as well as addressing immediate and systemic conflicts.

Western problem solving models of conflict resolution are also inadequate in addressing the systemic social changes that need to take place to sustain positive social change in colonised societies. Problem solving models implement rather narrowly defined techniques designed to reach agreements which meet individuals' needs and interests. In contrast, participants' experiences of addressing racism and inequality indicate the importance of systemic change. As illustrated in the findings chapters, participants' experience of conflict transformation is characterised by an interconnected web of a wide range of relationships, projects and infrastructures that sustain social change both at individual and systems levels.

The findings also illustrate the importance of developing deeper understanding of the worldviews of those involved in conflict, and the importance of addressing power imbalances involved in the silencing of Indigenous worldviews. In contrast, Western problem solving models of conflict resolution address neither differences in worldview nor the power imbalances inherent in privileging Western worldview. By promoting Western conceptualisations of conflict processing as culturally universal, problem solving models continue the processes of Westernisation that silence Indigenous worldview both within conflict processing and the wider community. This silencing of Indigenous approaches is a form of structural violence which exacerbates conflict between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous peoples.

Although Western methods are in many ways inadequate to address conflicts involving colonised Indigenous peoples, Indigenous peoples at times choose to participate in Western style conflict resolution and mediation. Such choices may be made in order to protect Indigenous people from intragroup conflicts and/or scrutinisation (Noble 1997, personal communication). Other Indigenous people may choose these options to expedite an agreement regarding a particular conflict (Haberfield & Townsend 1993). If Indigenous peoples had access to Indigenous methods of conflict processing, as well as Western methods such as mediation and conflict resolution, choosing Western methods might

represent a form of Indigenous self-determination. However, the continuing proselytisation and commodification of Western methods of processing conflict (Kraybill 1996) limits Indigenous people's choices regarding appropriate conflict processing. Thus participation in Western mediation or conflict resolution may only represent a choice of a less adversarial form of Western justice.

Summary

The findings of this thesis indicate that Western problem solving models are inadequate in several respects for addressing the protracted conflicts between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples that characterise colonised societies. In contrast, the findings support many aspects of transformative approaches to processing conflict. In the following section, I draw conclusions regarding the ways in which the findings of this thesis inform theory and practice of conflict transformation.

Australian Ethnopraxis and Conflict Transformation

The ethnopraxis discussed in this thesis reflects many of the central characteristics of Western methods of transforming conflict. These similarities indicate that effective dialogue and sharing could be built around Western conflict transformation and current ethnopraxis regarding intercultural conflict transformation. Particularly in conflicts that involve both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, transformative approaches have the potential to bring about sustainable positive changes in conflict.

In the following subsections, I discuss the ways in which the ethnopraxis of the findings chapters supports many of the premises of Western conflict transformation. I compare the central characteristics of both in regard to interconnected webs of relationships and processes, and conceptualisations of time.

The ethnopraxis discussed in this thesis describes conflict transformation not as a set of discrete techniques, but as interconnected processes and projects that link understanding, relationships, and positive social change. Likewise, Lederach (1997) describes conflict transformation as a process-structure, a web of flexible interconnections, able to shift to adapt to changing needs. Bush and Folger (1994) also describe transformative processes as being responsive to participants' experience rather than rigidly adhering to a prescribed set of techniques.

The findings in this thesis indicate that sustainable conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians incorporates a wide range of people and processes. Likewise, emergent Western conflict transformation utilises processes that involve a wide range of participants and processes designed to sustain positive social change (Lederach 1997). In contrast, the dominant Western models of conflict resolution and mediation most often involve only facilitators and a few people who are directly involved in the dispute, or who have been selected to be spokespersons for the larger group. As explained in Chapter Four, Western conflict resolution methods are most often limited to addressing specific conflicts; they seldom address changing the systems that sustain the conflict (Lederach 1997). In this context, Western conflict transformation offers opportunities for intercultural dialogue regarding consensual conflict processing between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in colonised countries.

Both Western conflict transformation and the ethnopraxis discussed in this thesis employ extended measures of time. Participants in this study conceptualise time frames of sustainable conflict transformation as encompassing generations, extending into the past as well as the future. They explain that any meaningful measures of transformation must be made with consideration of the effects of that change on children who are yet to come, as well as to ancestors who laid the foundation for current change.

Likewise, Western conflict transformation scholars emphasise conflict transformation processes that can be sustained over long periods of time. Lederach (1997. P. 78) maintains that people working to transform conflict in deeply divided societies must begin to think in time units of decades:

> ...we cannot respond with quick fixes to situations of protracted conflict. We must think about the healing of people and the rebuilding of the web of their relationships in terms relative to those that it took to create the hatred and violence that has divided them.

In contrast, the dominant Western practices of conflict resolution and mediation are strictly bounded by time/space constraints. Conflict resolution proceedings and mediation sessions tend to take place at a specific, more formal location within a restricted period of time (Burton 1996; Fisher & Ury 1994).

The ethnopraxis discussed in the findings chapters reflects the importance of acknowledging participants' intellectual, emotional, spiritual and bodily experience. Participants describe all of these experiences as being central to conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. Likewise, conflict transformation

scholars describe effective processes as incorporating a wide range of human experience in personal, relational and cultural dimensions (Lederach 1997, p. 82-82).

Summary

The findings of this thesis point out the inadequacies of Western problem solving models when they are used to address conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in colonised societies. They also highlight the similarities between Western conflict transformation and the ethnopraxis discussed in this thesis. This research has focused on conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. However, the findings suggest that these processes may also benefit the transformation of conflict between other Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in colonised countries. Further research is needed to expand ethnopraxis regarding conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, which would facilitate dialogue between theorists and those directly involved in conflict.

Methodological Issues

Within this research, drawing upon the differing epistemologies of the people involved allowed me to elicit knowledge regarding sustainable conflict transformation between people from very dissimilar cultures. Similar processes of eliciting ethnopraxis have been used to increase cross-cultural knowledge of effective strategies in other conflicts, as seen in the work of Lederach (1995, 1999) and Kraybill (1996). Through elicitive research methods, participants' worldview, beliefs and values are integrated into the elicited ethnopraxis. Likewise, attention to the worldview that underlies researcher's approach is an integral part of effective cross-cultural methodologies.

To increase the transparency and verisimilitude of my research, I have openly acknowledged my worldview, beliefs and values as an Indigenous scholar. I have endeavoured to implement Indigenist research that:

> Takes the rights of indigenous peoples as the highest priority ... draws on the traditions – the bodies of knowledge and corresponding codes of value – evolved over many thousands of years by native peoples the world over (Churchill 1996, p. 509).

Although many Western researchers fail to acknowledge the ways in which their research is a product of their worldview, all research is shaped by the researcher's beliefs and values (Peat 1994, p. 91). Thus researchers who fail to acknowledge the influence

which their worldview has on their research perpetuate the mythology of totally objective science, thus supporting the hegemony of Western Science. I have also endeavoured to clearly name my research as an ideological approach, using my privileged position as an Indigenist researcher to decrease the structural violence inherent in the Westernisation of formal academic research.

Limitations of this Thesis

I acknowledge the limitations of my thesis in regard to decolonising formal academic research. In the following subsection, I discuss the ways in which my research is limited by my own experiences of colonisation. I then discuss the ways in which university requirements for a PhD thesis contribute to silencing Indigenous ways of managing knowledge within formal academic research.

Colonised Knowledge

As discussed in Chapter Two, Westernisation affects formal academic research in many ways, not the least of which is the colonisation of Indigenous researcher's minds that occurs through Western education. Although I have challenged the hegemony of Western theory and methodologies within this thesis, I find myself limited by the dominant Western worldview in which I am often immersed. I have concerns that my work continues to be affected by the 'unintended residue of imperialism' (Lederach 1997, p.38) which is a result of colonisation.

As I discussed previously, the dominant Western worldview which permeates most formal academic research represents a challenge to research involving Indigenous peoples. Even though I have implemented Indigenist methodologies, there are ways in which I find my thesis limited by Western conceptualisations. In attempting to communicate within Western disciplines and institutions, for example, I have written about Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples as though they were separate entities. The way in which I have discussed the participants' experiences, for example, is framed in a dichotomous relationship: Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. I chose to write my thesis in this manner in order to illuminate cross-cultural differences in worldview which are often overlooked in academic research. However, the categorisations I have used represent an atomistic dualism that is in contradiction to the interconnected webs of meaning within many Indigenous epistemologies.

The work of other scholars indicates that the dual categories of Aboriginal/non-Indigenous which I have used in my thesis are meaningless in many Indigenous ontologies. Australian scholar Michael Christie (1992, p.19) explains that the interconnected, extending webs that constitute a human being in Yolgnu Aboriginal Australian ontology contrast with the atomistic, individual units that constitute a human being in the dominant Western worldview:

> Not only do many Westerners perceive an atomised objective reality, but we go to great lengths to actually create one out of entities which are most obviously human constructions rather than ontological realities. Me contrasting Yolgnu and Western realities, for example. As soon as I take the mass of Australian humanity and construct two groups, black and white, I have drawn an artificial boundary. But there is not real cut off point between them. I have created 'for argument's sake', two hypothetical entities in the real world. And as I go on, I speak of Aborigines and whites as if they were two molecules in the social universe, ignoring the exceptions, ignoring changes over time, ignoring how the reality of one group must always somehow be seen in terms of the other. I fail to notice the truths inevitably rendered absent by setting up two discrete, permanent, essentially different but unreal groups.

Although this thesis illuminates many connections between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous people, and the ways in which these connections change over time, I find myself conceptually limited by discussing participants' experiences as two separate social groups. It might seem that this thesis is flawed by such a paradox. However, exploring paradox can assist participants in conflict transformation to move forward into more positive action (Lederach 1997). Indeed, a growing number of scholars describe the importance of grappling with this paradox. In speaking of difference and power regarding the worldviews of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, for example, Wessells and Bretherton (2000, p. 101), state that:

> While it is important not to lose sight of the diversity within each group, the implications of fundamental difference in worldviews between Aboriginal and Anglo-Australians for reconciliation processes are profound. Even when there is good will and recognition of the need for dialogue, there is a danger that the processes and interpretation of the dominant group will be adopted, its issues seen to be key, and its rules and evidence and authority will guide the proceedings. If this happens, then attempts at reconciliation will be, rather than a new beginning, a continuation of the oppressive past.

I hope that openly discussing this apparent paradox will enhance and encourage further research which more clearly articulates Indigenous ontologies within formal academic research.

I also found my work limited by the scarceness of literature which addresses the world as a living entity. The failure to acknowledge the world and all its beings as alive is one of

the greatest contrasts between Western and Indigenous epistemologies (Cajete 2000). Scholarly literature which conceptualises the world as alive can be found the work of Indigenist scholars Begay and Maryboy (1998), Cajete (2000) and Hill (1998), as well as emergent Western scholars Reason (1993) and Suzuki and Knudson (1992). Nevertheless, research which integrates these conceptualisations makes up the smallest fraction of scholarly literature. This research thesis points out the need for further research which more clearly articulates Indigenous epistemologies in this respect.

Limitations imposed by the institution

I also acknowledge limitations that were imposed by the structures of the University of Queensland under whose auspices I carried out this research. Firstly, the ethics committee of the university required that all the participants in this research remain anonymous. However, in many Aboriginal ways of managing knowledge, stories are not disembodied data, they belong to specific people (Christie 92; Williams 97). In an attempt to respect Aboriginal knowledge management, I requested that the ethics committee approve my request for participants to be allowed to identify themselves with their story if they so chose. This option would not have prevented any participant from remaining anonymous. However, the ethics committee refused my request, stating that all research participants had to remain anonymous for the research to be approved through the university structure. I maintain that this requirement is a breach of Aboriginal knowledge management. My response has been to work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit of the University of Queensland to develop more culturally appropriate guidelines for research involving Indigenous peoples.

Another limitation of my research concerns culturally appropriate measures of evaluation for Indigenist research. Currently, there are no established procedures for formally evaluating Indigenist research in ways that acknowledge Indigenous epistemologies. My research has been based on an Indigenist approach which articulates its links with emergent Western research. I have therefore implemented measures of validity based both on Indigenist and emergent Western conceptualisations of rigor and validity. I had also hoped to incorporate both Western and Indigenous methods of formal evaluation of my research. This written document will be marked by three readers, as required by the university. In keeping with the Indigenist framework of my research, I have also requested that I be allowed to do an oral presentation which would reflect

Indigenous ceremonial negotiation of knowledge. In this ceremony, I hope to tell my story and open a dialogue, both with the markers of this thesis and community members including elders and other scholars. I am currently in the process of working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit and the University of Queensland to develop a proposal for an oral evaluation component for Indigenist research. We are planning guidelines for ceremonial evaluation that acknowledges the interconnections between the research and the community it is intended to serve. This design process is intended for other Indigenist scholars who desire their work to be evaluated in ways more culturally appropriate within Indigenous cultures.

I suggest that further research is needed regarding Indigenist perspectives of decolonising the academy. Such research would assist in expanding current knowledge and practice regarding Indigenist research, about which the literature is extremely limited. I also believe that more research is needed to elicit further ethnopraxis regarding conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in colonised societies. This research would add multiple perspectives, thus clarifying the central characteristics of people's experience and contributing to a wider body of conflict transformation theory and practice.

Building a larger body of knowledge regarding conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples would also benefit the international community. Research on the 100 armed conflicts that occurred around the world between 1985 –1987 indicates that approximately 85 of these conflicts involved Indigenous peoples fighting against the nation states which occupied their former territories (Churchill 1996, p. 515). Increasing knowledge regarding sustainable conflict transformation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples could enhance international peacebuilding efforts.

Closing

The Yolgnu Aboriginal people of Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory of Australia have shared a metaphor called *garma*, which represents the coming together of two very different knowledges. In *garma*

> Whitefella knowledge and Yolgnu knowledge come together and are articulated together and bring out something new which is relevant and meaningful ... which renews and does not repudiate ancestral history and yet which links the Yolgnu to the modern world and to a vision of the future (Christie 2001).

The metaphor of *garma* is drawn from a natural process that occurs in mangrove swamps. It has been shared with Whitefellas who are working to develop processes of dialogue between Aboriginal and Western ways of knowing.

> ...the *Garma* metaphor is the place in the mangroves where two lots of water come together: the fresh water comes down from the hills and fluctuates in the rainy season. The saltwater's coming in with the tides... it's really productive, and this is the point that the Yolgnu elders were making, it produces something which is quite unlike either of the two sources of knowledge... what is produced there is in no sense an assimilation of knowledge on the part of the learners in that context, to either of the two contributing knowledges. (Christie 2001).

This metaphor of *garma* provides a description of what I have endeavoured to illuminate within my research process in that this thesis:

- acknowledges both Indigenous and Western methods of consensual conflict processing
- draws together Indigenous and emergent Western ontologies and epistemologies to formulate methodology of Interconnected Knowing
- elicits knowledge from both Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians regarding their experiences of transforming conflict between them.

Through this integration of knowledges, this thesis articulates a set of themes that increase knowledge regarding sustainable conflict transformation between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians. These themes both honour the ancient traditional approaches of Indigenous peoples and draw upon the most recent knowledge of both Western and Indigenous scholars. It is my hope that this new information will assist in mending the web of interconnections that link these peoples, knowledges and lands.

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Appendix I

Webmaking

apology/forgiveness
Difference
empathy
humility
openness
young have more
Education
Respect
Other positions
Truth
Understanding
Ignorange of dominant group
effects of actions
readiness
Spiritual belief
Racism
bad intentions: persecution
secret/sacred
Bigotry
good intentions: mistakes
Kinship
respect/protocols
history of colonialism
Western Science
Trust
Indigenous worldview
Strong connection with feeling & intuition
group identification
resolving conflicts
awareness of underlying conflicts
easier for dominant group
Hope
alcoholism drug abuse
networking
Relationship
Spirit
Land
life & meaning
Nature
spiritual connection
acceptance
documentary
Working for Social Change
Men's Reconciliation Dinner
Aboriginal friends
younger: urban / older: missions
Goorie-Goorie Dreaming
Cross/Cutural Training Manual
Human Rights Principles
Death in Custody
privilege
Divisions
power
money
hypocrisy
seek unity
encompass many traditions
don't be gung ho/ step in & make assomptions
long period of time to build friendship
Time
People alienated from principles of justice
self
conflicts
awareness
meditation
prayer
Religion
wisdom
film of funeral
Healing
Community history
Contemplation

Appendix II

Portraits

Portrait #3

3.1. This participant is an Aboriginal woman, who holds a senior position within a university.

3.2. She explains how she makes decisions on social action based on community input rather than solely on individual goals. She talks about the challenges of working together with non-Indigenous organisations without alienating the Indigenous community.

3.3. In 1983, I entered the public education administration arena. I was asked to apply for the position and I was faced with a dilemma. To work within the system might provide opportunities to influence policy makers and strategists, but to join the public service might be viewed as a rejection of Aboriginal values and aspirations. To us, the government had been the enemy.

3.4. Working together

Before accepting the position,
I went and talked to people,
Some of the old people in that place
Where I was living.
And I said, 'What do I do?'
And they pointed out
How it was important to go inside
To find out how these places worked.
We needed some people on the inside
And some people on the outside.
If we could work together
Things might be able to be achieved.
It was on that basis that I went in.

3.5. The participant explained the importance of the concept of the *right time* for action, whether that action be towards increasing understanding or implementing social change. The *right time* also applies to determining whether particular people are ready to receive information and use it in a responsible manner. By *reading the ground,* (which is a way of knowing through deep listening, waiting and observation), the *right time* can be determined. The participant leaned traditional approaches to conflict prevention and transformation from her female Aboriginal elders. She explained to me how she prevents a lot of conflict from occurring, by watching and waiting for the *right time* to act. If one acts when it is not the *right time*, then communities, families and children may suffer from renewed racist attacks fueled by fears and misconceptions.

3.6. The Old Ones

They had taught me as they had been taught,

Those old ways of reading the ground.
Of what I might aim for
For the group that I carry with me, inside me.
In community, I wait.
And that's the way.
You wait.
You observe.
You can see.
You know the way, that it's a slow way.
You wait and people invite you.

She had been brought up that way
By her mother.
And she by her mother
And she by her mother
And so on.
All of those things I have from them.
From the strong ones.
The women hold so much of the information.
They won't give it
If it's not felt that it's safe to give it.
It's learning that judgement
From the women who were around me.

3.7. Strength of identity is important in resolving conflict. When you come from a strong foundation, you are much more effective in your actions.

3.8. *I know who I am*

Getting older has been helpful to me.
I think getting older is wonderful.
I can see things so much better
So much more clearly.
I have a much better understanding of things.
I know who I am very, very strongly
And where I belong so strongly.
More strongly than I have ever known it before.
Once you get through that
And you know who you are and people accept that,
You're much stronger in yourself
At being able to interact with others
That confidence of being able to speak
And knowing that you can speak for yourself,
Your people, And knowing how much you give away
And how much you don't.

3.9. This participant works to increase understanding among both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. She writes and lectures to disseminate accurate historical facts regarding Indigenous people. She stresses the importance of understanding the Dreaming.

3.10. Spirituality permeates all aspects of Aboriginal life. The concept which encompasses Aboriginal spirituality is what has become known as The Dreaming. It is the organising logic of Aboriginal life, the Law, which encompasses all things. The realm of Spiritual existence is not divorced from the material world, but embedded in it. It is all things past, present and future; therefore, it is ever present and ongoing.

3.11. The Dreaming

I went on to explain
About the Dreaming.
I am sick to death
Of people using the past tense all the time
Because you can't escape the Dreaming.
It's there.
It always will be.
It has always been.
People don't understand.
A lot of our young ones
Have it wrong too
Because they haven't
Had the old ones
To pass it on to them.

3.12. **This participant finds it difficult to increase understanding of Aboriginal cosmology, which is one of interconnectedness of: past, present and future; of land and living beings upon it;**

3.13. The concept which encompasses Aboriginal spirituality is what has become known as The Dreaming by which all components of the Australian landscape is significant, and through which the spiritual and political identities of groups and individuals are formed.

3.14. Land is so Important to Us

Non-Indigenous Australians
View the land objectively.
It's something else,
It's not part of them.
It is there as an object
To be used for economic gain.
Whereas, Aboriginal people
Are of that place
And that place is of them, too.
You can't separate the two.
So the land, the place
The sea, water, air
Air flows, the wind
And the creatures
Are part of you

And you are part of that whole.

3.15. **The participant talks about the importance of respect in the process of developing understanding, nurturing relationships and working together for positive social change. This respect is based on the concept that each individual has good within them and that can be nurtured and brought out.**

3.16. Respect for All

Everyone has some good.
Sometimes you've got to dig
For it, really, to find it
But you can find it usually.
Focus on that.
Try and develop that.
Develop that so that comes out
And overwhelms all the flaws
They have in their characters.
No one is all bad.
Find their strengths,
Know their faults, their flaws.

3.17. Respect for Elders

There was one woman
Who has lived there
Since she was a little girl,
But she's not of that place.
And she's an elder.
She was one of the elders
Brought up through the mission system.
They had a different way of doing things,
The way they were taught,
The way they had to behave,
Things they weren't allowed to do.
She's been here a long time.
Listen.
Respect her.
You don't have to agree
With everything she says.
But always respect her.
Always act politely.
And it works.
It works.
It's most important.
You must show respect.
It's the way we're taught.

3.18. The participant stresses that another part of respect is approaching non-Indigenous people in gentle manner. Approaching with aggression builds defensiveness which blocks other information from getting through. She finds demonstration more effective than confrontation.

3.19. Look at Me

Look at me.
Everything that people say
About Aboriginal people
has touched
everyone of us in our families
I can't change that.
That is what makes me
Me.

I demonstrate.
I demonstrate in
My interactions with people.
I'm friendly.
I'm very much committed in my work
To people understanding
What Aboriginal people are all about.
Avoid the things that are going to upset people
Like the guilt trips.
I try to avoid confrontation.
Not to make people feel guilty that it is their fault
That these things have happened.
That will turn people the other way,
Will only lead to further racism.
Some people go full on and say:
Your lot are responsible
For the policies and practices of separation.
Of people from land.
Of children from families.
All those things.
Of people from language and culture.

It's not the people of today
I know.
It was people a long time ago
Who did it in ignorance
And their own ethnocentricity.
It's too late to do anything about that
But changes can be made.
You can explain that to people
Or demonstrate it
When they are ready.

3.20. In telling the story of the land use agreement between the Aboriginal people of the Moreton Bay area and the Redlands Shire Council, the participant illuminates the interconnectedness of: spirituality, relationship, community, land, past and future generations. The story illustrates the principles of respect, recognition, responsibility, dialogue and positive social change.

3.21. We believe that if something is meant to happen the forces are there to support it. We believe it very strongly. With Redland Shire itself, the mayor of Redland has lived at Cleveland Shire all of his life. He went to the Cleveland High School. There is a law in this state that (once those other harsh legislations for Aboriginal people were lifted) people have to go to school til they are 15 years of age. Which means high school. So they used to have to travel across to the mainland everyday to go to school. Where they met the children from the mainland. One of whom is now the mayor of Redland. That helped. He knew people, he had been at school with them, he played footie with them. He had been over at the island fishing and seen them there and been fishing with some of them and doing those things that young people do. So he had that understanding. He knew that people weren't all the terrible things that are often reported in the media. He knew enough, that when the approach was made to Redland Shire, about an agreement, and it was made by the land council, the mayor said, 'We would be interested, what do you propose?' So they went away and put something together and it was a lot of negotiation So it was learning how one another works, how one another perceive the future for the area and reaching a middle line I suppose but most importantly, is in principles, the basic principles for this to occur. There's a recognition of one another, that the Redland Shire Council recognised the people of Quandamooka as traditional owners and that the people of Quandamooka recognised the Redland Shire Council as having responsibility in terms of local government for that area. And from that point they were moving on a process agreement which has been set up in little bits, so there's lots of things happening. Some strategies have to be put into place. Let's do it properly, so these things are here for future generations. But by sitting down and talking, through negotiation, through mediation sometimes, they've got to a point where they agree. It's set a good example that when the time comes when they can go to the state to look at recognition like Native Title, they've got a good record anyway. And it's set an example for the rest of the country.

Portrait # 9

The participant is an Aboriginal woman who works in an Aboriginal organisation and conducts cultural awareness workshops. She is responding to my request for her experiences in intercultural conflict transformation and reconciliation.

9. **She describes her experiences in deepening her own understanding of Indigenous worldview in conjunction with working to increase the understanding of non-Indigenous people.**

9.1 I started off as a student at uni. I had to learn a different way of presenting oneself. I knew it was happening at the time. I would, where it was possible, draw on what I knew about Aboriginal ways of thinking: what I imagined it to be, too. Not as a kind of study, from my family experience and family and relations telling me things. I started off almost like carrying a banner, trying to work out ways in which to slip in some Aboriginal examples or incidents to highlight something. In philosophy, Hobbes and all that sort of stuff, I certainly called on what I knew about conflict management. I knew even then it wasn't conflict resolution.

9.2 In the Aboriginal community, I was working in a team. Lila was on the board, so we would approach government departments and people and confront their policies with very much our own ideas. I had a good start in that way, both working on my own and working in conjunction with other Murri groups in trying to get certain ideas across. I did all sorts of things: started my own business doing cross cultural workshops, doing research with Aboriginal groups, writing papers, talking to government departments, federal and state and local.

9.3 I sort of went through stages: one is quite angry, you're younger, you're doing things in a confrontationist way. Then gradually the subtleties become more clear to you and the worthwhileness of using a more subtle approach.

9.4 **She describes her experience of deepening and broadening her understanding of Indigenous worldview through contact with a wide range of Indigenous people. Through these experiences, she developed an appreciation of the value of Indigenous culture.**

9.5 I started off basically in a political way, even though there's this whole cultural world which I had grown up with. They call it assumed knowledge. But that was just there, waiting, and I would use it, but not as much as I should have. When I came back into the community, it broadened out from that one autonomous group, my own mob, and my understanding, deep understanding of what it means, what an Aboriginal worldview is, as opposed to just what one mob thought. I went from looking at Aboriginal people as being victims (it was a slow, gradual sort of change) to seeing that Aboriginal cultural values had an intrinsic worth just in themselves and

as possible examples to teach other people, other cultures. Something to offer, not just to always see it as: we've been hard done by.

9.6 In Murri worldview,
It is not important
To write the ultimate truth.
What is important
Is to keep telling the story
Over and over again.

9.7 **I asked her to describe her experiences of people beginning to understand Aboriginal issues.**

9.8 They're usually quite emotional. People can't believe what they're hearing, not only about the bad things, but about the depth of various aspects of Aboriginal culture that they never realised because they accepted the stereotypes out there. I wasn't expecting such emotionalism from Whitefellas. I didn't think they would care one way or another, or if it did, it touched them only slightly, not deeply. But it did.

9.9 There are others who are really interested in some of the implications of the ideas or values that Aboriginal people hold in general. It is much deeper than they thought. So they really want to enter into a more open respectful kind of talk about these things: what social values there are, how societies are changing, how their own society is changing. They're actually looking for answers and the opportunity to listen and learn, meet Aboriginal people, talk with Aboriginal people.

9.10 **We both use metaphors of movement in talking about cross cultural understanding.**

9.11 **People can't move forward**
Until they understand
There is a different view of reality.

9.12 It is the first hurdle
They have to get over.

9.13 **She explains that not all people respond to increased knowledge with increased understanding.**

9.14 Some people would come with the idea that what they are entering into is a debate. So they came with a strong kind of idea that they have positions to defend to do with Europeans and Aboriginal people. They were quite prepared for a debate, a row. They wanted it actually. They came in with the attitude that: this is what I think, you prove me wrong. So the last thing in the world they were expecting, or wanting, is any kind of relationship. They want the facts. Sometimes they were quite surprised by what they did end up with. Quite often they would be surprised that things aren't as

simple as that. It's far more complex than a straight factual answer that they were looking for.

9.15 **In her experience, some non-Indigenous people use information about Indigenous people to fill a gap in their own lives, trying to take on some aspects of Aboriginal identity rather than strengthening their own identity.**

9.16 They actually want you
To be their conscience.
The conscience of the whole country.
They see Indigenous people
As this figure.
The figure doesn't
Have to open its mouth.
It just has to be there,
Mute.

9.17 I think they see Aboriginal people as a medium or a conduit to the spiritual. It isn't even Aboriginal spirituality as such. It's just the spiritual world. They think they can use that, as if you can sort of get on a bus and arrive somewhere else. They have their own personal views about why they come to this workshop and partly it is because they are feeling lost themselves and they think that somehow Aboriginal stuff, Indigenous stuff will help them almost to become whole. There's more than a little bit of wanting to take on a new religion, take on becoming Murri in some way or another.

9.18 **She describes her experience of forming working relationships with non-Indigenous people and her reluctance to form closer relationships.**

9.19 I haven't taken them on to develop really deep sort of relationships or friendships. The politicos or the intelligentsia, it's almost like an acknowledgment. They are always around, so you are in touch with them, but I never really developed any deeper relationship than that. I'm sort of reluctant to because I've always had a wariness about getting to the point where Aboriginal content is a subject for dinner party conversation. It's good to talk to intelligentsia, but that's what they often do, is use it as a talking across the dinner table. I just always feel it sets up too many kind of contradictory things for me. I am Aboriginal, we are Indigenous people, and we're talking about it as object. So it gets all blurred and I get a bit uncomfortable when it gets blurred like that, keeps jumping from subject to object.

9.20 **I ask for her experiences with people who move from understanding into equal relationships with Indigenous people and work jointly with them to bring about positive social change.**

9.21 Some people are quite quiet about their intentions, quite quietly determined to bring about some kind of change in their own sphere to do with Aboriginal stuff. They will be interested in establishing or working towards

making some kind of actual change in society. I always feel a bit more comfortable with those sort of people. But people who are quite practical and want to make some really lasting change, I've always felt much more comfortable with them. They're quite good relationships. I don't see them all the time, but when we do meet, they're really good solid equal relationships, a sense of equality. They're not tagging around. They don't need you.

9.22 **I summarise what I have heard her say about building relationships with non-Indigenous people.**

9.23 **It's the people who want to go**
Beyond understanding
And start on some action,
Although they realise that to truly understand
Is a lifetime journey.
The people who are most effective
Are the ones who have done some work
On themselves,
Who are beginning to look at their society's worldview,
Their own personal identity,
But then move forward into some kind of action
As equal partners.

9.24 Those are the most productive relationships.

9.25 **I asked her about the things that Indigenous Australians do in conflict transformation that maintain and improve relationships. She explained that conflict affects the relationship of the entire community, not just the people directly involved in the incident.**

9.26 That is a fact of life sometimes, some people will always be enemies. That's the value of those avoidance relationships: that doesn't solve anything, all it does is manage the problem so there is not that much fallout to disturb everyone else. Just manage to quieten it down a bit, to keep it within a manageable kind of form.

9.27 Whitefella mediation: it's a purely political thing, it's got nothing to do with trying to bring about actual peace, actually improve the relationship. I'm sure that Aboriginal people saw that because it could be too easily politicised, that relationship. We always had two people, because one person, it was far too much responsibility on one person. It was too much to expect that that person would be almost like a God's eye point of view. All perspectives of a particular problem and the more the better. We just sort of approached it differently, the actual practice of mediation and conflict.

9.28 If you want to go further, this is to do with Indigenous people, but looking at it globally, they are not just total sole individuals. Even those other Whitefellas have other people and work relationships, so everybody is

affected by that complaint or that fight. Children are affected. Children to come are affected.

9.29 **I asked her to expand on her comment that Indigenous Australians are more spirituality than physicality. She explains that self knowledge is a prerequisite of spirituality and deep relationship.**

9.30 We equate a spiritual life, the acceptance of it, as a mark of maturity. Australians don't know themselves very well. The very first step in trying to establish a really good relationship with 'the other' is to have full knowledge of yourself first. You might say that you also acquire full knowledge of yourself reflected in relationship with somebody else. But collective self knowledge has to start somewhere. Australians never give it a go. They think all there is to know is what they already know. Any kind of comment that sounds like a critique, they take as a criticism. It's very difficult to form a mature relationship like Murris would want. The other person has to be mature enough to want that relationship on a deeper level, not on a shallow transparent, products of culture level, but on a much deeper philosophical, soul level. In order to do that, they have to have some kind of self knowledge. To me, to most Murris, there isn't any there. We don't see it. I don't see it.

9.31 One way is accepting the boundaries of their spiritual life as their own responsibility. We want to be really careful about taking on any kind of proselytising role. It doesn't really count if it works like that. It ought to be, from a Murri point of view, it ought to be done in this natural evolutionary kind of gradualism. If we want long term kind of stuff to happen in a proper Indigenous way, then we have to take that long term view, not the short term missionary way. Religion can be taken on and put off. Whereas the cultural thing, you're imbued with. It's right throughout you. You are physically related to other people who are the same as you, who think and feel exactly the same way as you do.

9.32 **I asked her to expand on the sense of time in Aboriginal worldview. She talked about the necessity of looking at the effects of change over a long period of time.**

9.33 That is probably one of the most difficult things. I must admit it is one of the most difficult things not only to get everyone to understand, but to actually explain to them. The reflective motif. You see it in the way they all rush off, with no thought to it. They approach the whole of life like that. You can't acquire a reflective motif about things if you do it like that. The best thing about that reflective motif is that you do think about the consequences of your actions. To me, Whitefellas never look at the consequences of their actions. They never do. Only in the immediate, not in the great long term because they just simply don't live in the long term.

9.34 **I respond with my understanding of seeing the bigger picture.**

9.35 **In Native American tribes,**
It permeates
And is one of the basic spiritual beliefs
That everything must be done,
Any action that is taken
Should be done
With consideration
Toward the Seven Generations.
How it is going to affect
The next seven generations.

9.36 That's it, simply what it is, the reflective motif.

9.37 **She explains that recognising and respecting interconnectedness is the beginning of self knowledge.**

9.38 We are tied to things. That is the first criteria for this kind of self knowledge. The way we see Europeans generally is like a discrete entities whirling in time and space. Occasionally they get together for huge ideological political kind of reasons. But generally because they are discrete entities they have to have possessive qualities about them that tells them who they are, because they are not tied to anything. It's the materialistic philosophy that says that I am who I am because I own two cars, two homes, but also because there is nothing else that matters in life except this acquisition. It tells them where they are going and who they are, but in actual fact it doesn't. It's a very hollow, shallow kind of identity. That kind of behaviour is held up to great esteem all over the world. That totally mitigates against the possibility of even having a reflective motif in life, because you've got to stop for a while and wonder. It's lucky for Western society that not everybody does that; they would all be poor. If they had that reflective motif, there basically wouldn't be a Western society.

9.39 **I asked her to expand on her comment that in learning to care for the land, we learn to care for each other.**

9.40 For us, the starting and end point, I suppose, is always that relationship with land. Treating it in a certain way. If it could begin and end with that, then we're well on the way, I reckon, well on the way.

9.41 Those totemic ancestors did pass on the law over a long period of time, eons of time of how to have these arrangements in society, how to look after the land itself. I'm sure it was a reciprocal thing that was deemed to be of more importance to having a lasting relationship than having a comfortable relationship, rather than having a surplus. To me, why societies turn out the way they do is absolutely worked on by the nature of the land itself. The actual land itself works on it. I'm sure ideas don't just come up out of nowhere.

9.42 Murris had to work out
How to get along with people
Without killing each other,
Giving conflict its natural place
So we understand the problems.
How do we live
Without damaging the environment?
Finding answers
Which don't make people feel
Lonely or alienated or nervous.

9.43 **How do we live without being alienated?**
I think that is a fundamental question
To us being human.

Portrait # 10

The participant is a non-Indigenous woman active in politics and community affairs. She is responding to my request for her experiences in conflict transformation and reconciliation.

10. **She shares her thoughts on increasing understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.**

10.1 I think if you give your own words
In your own way,
It comes from the heart.

10.2 **She describes how she developed the commitment to fight racism through understanding its effects on an Aboriginal girl in her community.**

10.3 My interest in Indigenous people started with my first encounter with racism when I was a teenager in a small country town. There weren't very many Aboriginal people in the community and I didn't have any Aboriginal children ever in my class at school. But when I was a teenager I was in a netball club. A bank managers' wife had an Aboriginal girl working for her. She was wanting to get her into a better job and to be able to mix with girls her own age so that when she left the town, she wouldn't be spending all her life doing housework and looking after other people's children. She asked the coach could the girl join our netball club. If it had been a white girl, the coach would have said, 'Of course, come along.' But she said, 'Oh, well I will speak to the girls about it.' There were some who felt so strongly about it, and the most racist comments came forward. The coach must have gone back and said there was too much opposition, so she didn't join the club. Also, she wanted to be a nurse and she never became a nurse. There was almost a walkout. Being my first lesson, from then on, I felt that I would always speak out whenever I saw anything like that.

10.4 I hated racism.
I look back now and feel ashamed
That at times I heard comments
And walked away.
This is what
The reconciliation movement has done.
Those study circles taught us
To speak out.

10.5 **She describes how personal experience with Indigenous people can change perceptions and stereotypes and lead to supportive action. She is referring to the speech given by the Governor General's wife at a reconciliation conference.**

10.6 When she spoke, she said she was like everybody else, she said, 'I had some misconceptions about some things.' Going with her husband up into

the communities and meeting the people changed her attitude completely. Now she would really speak for their rights.

10.7 **She explains how she educated herself on Indigenous issues, developing understanding through reading Indigenous people's descriptions of their lives, and reading current interpretations of Australian history.**

10.8 I was very involved with World Vision. And Neville Bonner was their patron. His biography came out and I got it and read it and suddenly I thought, 'With all my years, how ignorant I was.' I was totally unaware they were not allowed to go to school in White schools. When I discovered Neville could not go to school with White children, that was the first I even knew and I realised that there is an awful lot that I don't know. And so after that, I bought other Aboriginal people's biographies and autobiographies and read books by Henry Reynolds. And I educated myself a bit in that way to have a better understanding of what happened. I was horrified and became more horrified as I went along with what I've learnt and I am still being horrified by so many things.

10.9 People say we can stand up
On Anzac Day (and quite rightly so,
I have no argument with that).
Then some of those same people say,
What happened to Aborigines,
That happened in the past.
They should forget.
You can't dwell on the past.

Well, *we're* dwelling on the past
All the time.

10.10 **She explained that developing cross cultural understanding is a challenge and involves acceptance rather than judgment.**

10.11 While we sit in judgement of them,
We have never considered whether they understand us.

An Aboriginal friend confided in me,
For a long time she failed to understand
How White people could own a large home
With room to spare and not share it,
When so many people are homeless.
She eventually realised that we were
A different culture,
And she learned to accept when
Our ways differed from the ways of her people.

10.12 **She explains that to truly understand, we must learn to see the situation through the eyes of the other even though we can never fully achieve that state of awareness.**

10.13 If we could put ourselves
In an Aboriginal person's skin,
We might be able to understand
The disappointments, prejudices and injustices
That are the norm for an Aborigine.

We could never fully understand
The special relationship
They have to the land,
Their Sacred Sites,
Or their Dreamtime stories.

10.14 **She talks about the role of acceptance and forgiveness in developing relationships.**

10.15 When I was in my 20's I decided to take two little girls from the Tufnell home in Brisbane. They got in touch with me and said did I mind if I took an Aboriginal child. And I said, 'You know of course I don't mind.' I was horrified at the time and I said to my husband, 'Well, some people must say they don't want Aboriginal children.' She was the most adorable child. I asked her where she came from and she looked down at the floor and said, 'Oh, Alice Springs.' I said, "Did you ever see your mother?' She shook her head. I didn't know about the Stolen Generation at the time. I did think, 'that seems a bit unjust', but I thought the authorities knew what they were doing and I let it go. I intended taking those girls every year, but times were hard and we were following the work around, so I never had an opportunity to do it. I didn't know anything about the Stolen Generation until it came out and I thought then that she must have been one of them. I went into my local library looking for a book to read and I picked up a book called The Wailing. And I saw her name and I thought, 'I wonder if that is her.' And I checked, because it being an unusual name and the story in it was the same story that she told me, so I got in touch with her. I wrote to her. I knew she had gone back to Alice Springs. I apologised that I hadn't had them again. She was so excited she rang me up. And we've been in touch ever since.

10.16 **She describes her experience of developing close friendships with other Indigenous women.**

10.17 I was in a public speaking organisation for women. I knew one of the clubs was having this Aboriginal woman come and speak. I went along to hear what she had to say. And I met Jackie, and her mother was there. I don't know how I kept in touch with Jackie, but we became good friends and I became very close to her mother. We used to ring one another up and we might be on the phone for about an hour and we visited one another's homes. It was the sort of friendship that lasted and when her mother was ill, I used to go and visit her in the hospital.

10.18 **She describes an experience which increased understanding, developed relationships and inspired social action.**

10.19 With reconciliation, Jackie talked us into going to this wonderful convention in Melbourne. We decided afterward that that was the best money that we had ever spent in our lives. It started with a concert and ended with that. It was well mixed all through, all cultures: Indonesian instruments, Samoan and Irish and Spanish dancers. They had an Australian country singer and Aboriginal music and for the finale, they all came on and the music from everybody all blended in together, the dancers danced and an Aboriginal dancer wove his way through them, in and out. Perfect reconciliation message. When Father Brennan had said to us to apologise to any of the Indigenous people around, we were all in tears and a young fellow that was beside me, he ended up comforting me. He was on the same plane as I was, only sitting a couple of seats from me. I promised him then that when I got back, I would really do something about it and I started a reconciliation study circle. I joined another study circle and I felt I needed to do more, so I come over here (to Australians for Reconciliation) once a week to do voluntary work.

10.20 We cried a lot
And laughed a lot
And shared a lot,
Met some wonderful Indigenous people.
When Father Brennan told us
You can apologise,
I don't think there was a dry eye
In the place.
What got to us was their lack of bitterness
Because he said:
'If they will accept
Your apology.'
The friend that I was with,
She touched the shoulder
Of the man in front of her,
And he said,
'God bless you my dear.'
It was that sort of attitude
That made us all weep.

10.21 **She describes her experiences with reconciliation study circles as providing a firm knowledge base on which to develop understanding and relationships that lead to action for social change.**

10.22 The group that I am with now felt that they needed more education for themselves for a while longer, and they've been doing that, but they've put on a public forum which was very good. A couple of them are going up to Woodford to work at the Woodford Folk Festival (to work with reconciliation issues). One of them went to Kakadu, to the mining thing and ended up in jail. I think that has inspired her more. Probably if she hadn't been in the group to start with, she probably wouldn't have led on to this. I

can see groups, even if they do wander away, doing their own thing. At least they are doing something.

10.23 Lettie and I went up to that meeting up at Morayfield a while ago with Courier Mail and Channel 9. And Lettie stood up and she didn't ask a question so much as make a statement and attacked Ron Brunton and some of his statements and got the loudest applause. She said, 'I'm a 74 year old woman and I didn't know about a lot of things that went on and I've lived to this age before I find out the things.' She hadn't gone there with anything planned to say, but they got her steamed up and so she stood up and of course she can think on her feet and speak out well. That's what she said afterward, 'I wouldn't have been game to stand up and say what I said and I wouldn't have felt knowledgeable enough to have said anything.' So that's what it has done for her.

10.24 The other reconciliation group wrote to all the high schools in Brisbane and did up a kit for Reconciliation week and made suggestions where they could get videos, etc. One school gave us feedback: They set the whole day aside. The grade nine students had put together a reconciliation rap. 'Thumbs up for reconciliation, thumbs down for discrimination.' I think they are the age we need to reach out to a lot, they are at a critical age. Young people are more accepting than older ones.

10.25 **She explains that one may deepen understanding by listening to an Aboriginal person tell their story.**

10.26 And this young girl (in the study circle) said, 'Well, what was the Act?' and I thought everybody knew about that. But unless you'd read about it, they wouldn't have known. Ruth talked about how she was at Cherbourg and they went into Murgon and they were only allowed in the town between 10 and 3 o'clock. If they weren't out of the town by then, if you missed the bus, you had to get walking quickly because you'd be thrown into jail if you were caught in town after that. Although I knew about The Act, I wasn't aware that it worked quite like that. I thought: what's the difference between here and South Africa?

10.27 **We discuss ways of listening to increase understanding. She was involved in writing a guide to listening to Aboriginal people.**

10.28 The Anglican church in Victoria just put together a booklet called a guide to listening. It is looking at listening through books, music and art, listening through oral stories.

10.29 **What an interesting idea, that there are other ways of listening than just with your ears. I've had a lot of my Aboriginal friends and colleagues say to me they listen without ears in different ways. They say, we can just know, when we walk in, we can feel it. It's their way of saying there are other ways to listen rather than just ears.**

10.30 **In the participant's experience, understanding of Indigenous people must go beyond understanding their disadvantaged situation in current society, and consider the interconnections between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, between present and past actions. She discusses the difference between seeing a current situation and understanding how that situation developed.**

10.31 A place that stood out a lot with me was Mt. Isa. The Kalkadoons stood up against the Whiteman but their spears were no match for their guns. We went into the town and I looked at the people and I thought: what have we done to you? They looked a completely beaten race. I took a book that I picked up on the Kalkadoons, the whole story of their fight and that's exactly what they did end up. They were warriors and they fought off the Whites for a long time. That's what they ended up, just a beaten race. You could see it in the town. I had my hair cut while I was there and the girl who came from Redcliffe said, 'I wasn't racist till I came up here.' She was racist and admitted she was as much as anybody else in the town. Everybody's got problems, but the trouble is people don't look beyond how they come to get these problems.

10.32 **She explains that one step in restoring balance is to support Aboriginal initiatives.**

10.33 The first one (caravan park) we came to was the Aboriginal one, so I said, 'Oh, I'll go in and see if it's vacant.' And it was wonderful. You drove in to the little area that was surrounded by garden and you woke up in the morning with the birds singing up above you and it was beautiful. It was one of the best ones we stayed in, but the sad part is probably a lot of Whites wouldn't stay there because it was run by Aborigines. Then if they don't make a go of it, they will say, 'Look, the Aborigines can't make a go of it.' I say, 'They can't make a go of it if people don't stay there.' It struck me when we came: you give them back their dignity, but take away their dignity and what have they got? I saw two places where they were given back their dignity and it was wonderful.

10.34 **In her travels around Australia, some of the White people she came across living in and/or running caravan parks lived in dirty surroundings and abused alcohol. Yet these are the same behaviours for which many non-indigenous Australians condemn Aborigines. It seems to me that people are quick to stereotype the behaviour of the 'other' and slow to stereotype members of their own group. I expressed this to the participant in this way:**

10.35 **If one White person does something,**
It's just one White person,
But one Aborigine does something,
All of a sudden,
Instead of being just one of them,
It becomes a judgement
On the whole group of people.

They don't judge
Their own group so harshly.
It's just another individual.
But if an Aborigine does something,
It's just a blanket inditement.
That does a lot
About stripping away their dignity too.

10.36 Yes it does.

10.37 **She summarises her understanding of Aboriginal people and the impact of colonisation upon their culture. She stresses the importance of friendship in redressing the imbalances brought about through past actions.**

10.38 The Aborigines have occupied this land
For 40,000 years.
They were at one with
The animals,
The natural forces,
The environment.
After the White man settled here,
A nomadic race was expected to adjust
To sedentary living.
People of different tribes
Were put together on reserves.
They spoke different languages,
But now had to learn to speak one,
The English language.

10.39 A healthy race of people
Were introduced to a foreign language,
Culture, cruelty, and disease.
And many of us expect
Them to pick up the broken pieces
And live as the White man dictates.

How many of us have offered them
A hand of friendship?

10.40 **She explains the importance of encouraging deep understanding among future generations, which will lead to more effective social action.**

10.41 Let us make sure
Our children and grandchildren
Grow up with a knowledge
Of Aboriginal culture,
And what they have endured.
Let us ensure

They see beneath the surface,
So the harm that has been done
Might be rectified,
And changes brought about
That will overcome the effects
Of the past.

Portrait #12

The participant is a non-Indigenous man who works in community development, both in Australia and South Africa.

12. **He describes his experience in developing relationships with Aboriginal people in his community. In addition to issues of race, these relationships are impacted by substance abuse, illness and disadvantage.**

12.1 In terms of my journey in social change, it started when I made a decision to move into the local community. I came from a theological background initially. I moved to the local community and at the same time started studying Sociology through this university and linked up with a few people in the community who voluntarily wanted to be involved in a local project. We didn't even give it a name, just solidarity, support, relationships. After I finished study full time, I made two choices. One was to move into an intentional community house that wanted to practice hospitality to people in the local community. There were at the house a range of Indigenous people that came and lived with us, so my introduction into the Indigenous culture was very much the few people that came and lived in that house. I didn't get involved in any formal work with Indigenous people in Brisbane.

12.2 The reason they came and lived with us is they were pretty fucked up people. One girl had health problems and she died within two years of living with us, just a really angry person, played loads of games, really manipulative. I wouldn't say that had anything to do with her being Indigenous. Young people are pretty good at playing games and manipulating us and taking us through the hoops. She also gave us a lot: at many times she was delightful. She was the most courageous person in facing death. A really good guy, an Aborigine, who used to live under the house, a local guy, was good to have around. When he got drunk he was difficult, but otherwise, he would just stop and be with us in the house, offering cups of tea to people that would visit. He would disappear for 3 months sometimes, but he would come back regularly. When he used to get drunk that's when he used to be scary. That's when the anger would boil and we were no longer _____ or _____, we were just Whitefellas. The relationship was gone once he was drunk.

12.3 **In the participant's experience, part of developing ethical understanding is understanding the racism embedded in self.**

12.4 The other experiences we had with Indigenous people is they used to rob us regularly. Near where we lived there was an Aboriginal hostel. And because we had an open house they knew we were easy pickings. One really classic incident in my life: I had invested in a nice CD Walkman, and then it was gone from my bed and I knew who had taken it, and I just couldn't believe it. I walked down the road and these three Murri guys were walking up the road. And one of them had my walkman on. So I was steaming, I was so angry. I went up and I grabbed my walkman and said, 'Don't steal from us, there's lots of really wealthy White people out there.

You can rip them off, but stop stealing what few things we have.' And they were really cool, said, 'Oh, sorry man, you know, we didn't know it was your place.' 'Yeah, right guys.'

12.5 Becoming aware of my own racism only occurred when it became emotive. When I got robbed, I was angry at Black people. I knew at that point that I'd just been robbed by someone and there were Black people in my mind. So it was racialised.

12.6 **Relationships are strengthened through recognising commonalities, including common problems.**

12.7 So that was actually the beginning of quite an interesting interaction with the folks in the hostel. Pretty scary environment, the original hostel, lot of violence, lot of shouting and broken windows. One incident I am sure I will always remember. This one day some woman that had been living with us who had a lot of problems with domestic violence, her husband discovered finally she was living at our place and he came at our door with an axe. Fortunately we had a back door and front door and literally there was a chase scene around the house and all the Murri people were sitting on the wall of the hostel across the road, laughing and saying, 'It's so good to see Whitefellas chasing each other around the house. We're so used to other people watching us chase each other around the house.' We built relationships with a lot of those people. We weren't any different, we had a lot of problems, especially when working with marginalised White people as well.

12.8 **The participant explained that at times he had put Aboriginal issues in the 'too hard basket' When anger was perceived as overwhelming, relationships were avoided. It is important to have skills of dealing with intense anger, a place or situation that is conducive to building relationships, and constructive social action which can be approached cooperatively.**

12.9 At the beginning it wasn't a conscious decision. We started saying, 'Hey, let's build relationships with a range of people and see where those relationships go in terms of projects.' You know we don't start with projects, we start with the relationship. And for some of us that meant visiting people who had psychiatric illness. For some that meant doing the migrant classes, which led into the whole migrant/refugee sector. I think a lot of us didn't know where to make contact with Aboriginal people other than down at Musgrave Park in West End and that's a pretty scary environment. People were drunk often at Musgrave Park, so that was scary. It just wasn't easy to build relationships, there wasn't a starting point. You go to the park and try and talk to people and they just tell you to fuck off or go and buy a carton of beer. I think we were inexperienced and didn't know where to start so unconsciously it was just easier to stay away. We didn't actually make any progress, we consciously stayed away, or unconsciously, it was just too difficult to start the relationships. We were pretty green in terms of knowing how to deal with anger, not

experienced enough to know that that's okay, take the anger and build through that. Just too scary for some of us, especially when there's other groups you can work with who aren't angry.

12.10 **When forming relationships with Aboriginal people, one is faced with the complexities of dealing with the long term effects of colonisation.**

12.11 Once it became a more conscious thing: we need to start really building relations, people discovered that they were quite marginalised from a whole range of other Indigenous groups. It is such an area of conflict you don't even know if you make a start where that is going to land you.

12.12 Then if you do make relationships, you talk to this person and they say, 'Yeah, you're relating to this person. They're such and such a tribe, they don't really come from this community. This is not their original land.' So you get confused. So it's just difficult and you stay away.

12.13 **Dealing with intense anger is extremely difficult, but beneath the anger of Aboriginal people is a challenge to non-Aboriginal people to commit to long term relationships and positive change.**

12.14 An Aboriginal woman who came to the same church that a whole heap of us would come on a Sunday night, she was so angry all the time. And she would get up and just rant and rave about one thing or another. Now most of the people in that congregation were people that felt they were doing as much as they could. They actually wanted to know what to do, but the only thing they were ever approached to do was give money. But if people said, 'You know we want to support you in other ways, we don't know what.' There was never anything positive or constructive, so it was always just: provide money and be the ears that heard the anger, and that just eroded people over the years. And I sat with that congregation for seven years and I distinctly remember people saying, 'You know, fuck, we're not the people... we're wanting solidarity and we're the ones copping the anger. We've had enough of this. I mean, I don't need to hear this any more...' Even the Murri tent at Woodford Folk festival, there's a Murri tent where people are really angry, a lot of Indigenous people get up, and unfortunately people that go to that tent are the people that are in solidarity and you just have to cop it. And I think it really wears you down until you find people that create space for proactive kind of work. If you are just listening to anger and being approached for money, it gets people down. I remember for a long time she was the power, she represented the Murri people for me and so that was a powerful message that said, 'I don't think I can deal with this level of anger.' So she was very powerful in a lot of people's lives in that congregation of people, she's changed now. It's ten years down the track and she knows people have journeyed for a long period, so she will work a bit more constructively now with a range of people that she has developed trust with. Dealing with the anger is very critical. Understanding: it's having a framework in your head that enables you to deal with that. 'Well she has every right to be angry, but I shouldn't react to that.' That takes maturity. When you are young, you haven't got

that. When you try and take that step forward, you don't know actually how to deal with that anger, or I certainly didn't and a whole range of my friends didn't. Now I could deal with it a lot more maturely and see beyond the anger to the pain and beyond the pain to, 'Hey, I'm testing you guys to see how committed you are,' those kind of sub-messages beneath the messages.

12.15 **Understanding can be developed through sharing the experiences of people dealing with similar cross cultural issues.**

12.16 When we consciously decided, 'we're going to make some progress here, we really need to work with the Indigenous people in the area,' actually the catalyst for that was two South Africans who came to visit that we had sponsored over, a Black and a White guy. That gave us a reason to set up a whole heap of seminars. We set up trips to Cherbourg, so that the two South Africans listened to Aboriginal people and we set up a much more formalised program, like radio shows and dialogues between some Indigenous people. We actually had that event which consolidated our attempts to work with Aboriginal people in the area.

12.17 **The participant describes his experience of being invited by Aboriginal people to join in positive social action.**

12.18 Then that Daniel York case which I told you was the death of a young boy in West End and it was a Deaths in Custody issue. There was a huge march in Brisbane, the biggest march I've ever seen, a silent march that was very powerful. It was like an invitation from Aboriginal people to stand with them that made it a lot easier. We met a whole heap of Aboriginal people who weren't so angry, who were some of the emerging leadership in that community that said, 'Stand with us.' That made it a whole heap easier.

12.19 **Knowledge regarding Indigenous people can be used for personal gain by non-Indigenous people. Therefore many Aboriginal people tend to be cautious about sharing with non-Indigenous people.**

12.20 A lot of people accumulate that expertise and then go on and become consultants, bureaucrats. That's what I mean by maturity. You gain a much stronger analysis of why Indigenous people put those barriers up. South Africa is exactly the same. People are used to White people coming into their communities and doing research, setting up community projects and leaving. So there's a deep mistrust. I think the analysis becomes critical, your own analysis of those issues, your capacity therefore to absorb the raw anger and understand it within a framework, clarifying your own set of values because that 'call not to exploit' is pretty challenging. Because you do accumulate experience and expertise and people will pay money for that. You are dealing with all those things in yourself, clarifying your own values. How am I going to immerse myself in this? Am I going to stay on the edge? Really difficult questions, particularly when you engage

with any marginalised group. How much do you invite people into your home, how much do you get into their world?

12.21 **In the participant's experience, it is important to develop an intellectual framework regarding conflict transformation, but for change to take place, individuals need to move into more holistic experience.**

12.22 I ran a youth work training course in South Africa with Black and Coloured Youth Workers. I'd run a session on gender. During lunch, I had fallen asleep on the sofa and there were six guys in the group and they didn't know that I had fallen asleep behind the sofa. They had all the rhetoric, in the workshop they were with it. Then during lunch, they were going, "Oh this is crap. We give stuff to women, they will stuff it up. If we give them any control, they don't do the work, they're not capable.' I got up and said, 'You know the problem with you Black people is that we are afraid to give you power because you are always stuffing up, the amount of times that we ask you to do things and you just don't do it…' They started getting angry. I just pushed it to the point where they actually realised what was really going on and I said, 'Well everything that I've said to you is exactly the same stuff you've said about the women.' It was very emotive and therefore broke beneath some of the intellectual stuff and that was the beginning of some really honest discussion around gender and racial issues for these young guys.

12.23 **In the participant's experience, working together with Indigenous people to bring about positive change involves issues other than race.**

12.24 One of the big issues boiling in the Aboriginal community here at the moment is some Aboriginal women have decided to 'come out' in terms of gender abuse, sexual abuse, knowing that they are going to be slandered for being not loyal to the Aboriginal cause. It's a really tough issue for a lot of Aboriginal women.

12.25 I've learned that there are many White bastards and Black bastards. I no longer see race as the primary issue. I was young when I went there (South Africa) and used to thinking that 'most Black people are good.'

12.26 **He describes his struggle to understand and support different worldviews.**

12.27 You have to be incredibly strong to constantly deal with it. You know, constantly Black people are saying, 'Hey, we're sick of you doing it the White way.' And then you would say, 'What is the alternative way?' And people couldn't say, or the alternative way was even more politically manipulative. I just got confused and ended up becoming racialised. I'm so sick of Black people saying, 'We're sick of doing it the White way.' And then they can't come up with their own way, so it's just confusing. It's dealing with that whole thing. A lot of African people are saying we need to develop an African epistemology and reaffirm African ways of

knowing, and African ways of doing philosophy, but taking this to the point of articulating what that is, people are really struggling to do that. At our best moments, we stand with them. But at our worst moments, when we are being attacked, it's really difficult, because you're doing your best, but you're being attacked about the White way. So, intellectually those emotions are very challenging. Emotionally it's about uncertainty and intellectually it's that question of, 'Well, what's this other way of doing, knowing, what is that about...' I think I had to leave because I was getting a bit lost in that, a bit confused, a bit hurt.

12.28 **In the participant's experience, there is a deeper level of emotion that affects racist behaviour and one's response to one's own racism. Becoming conscious of that deeper level of culture is the first step to changing it.**

12.29 Cause the whole thing around the stereotypes, coming to terms with: you are educated, so intellectually you know you need to be progressive. Emotionally you are aware of that at a deeper psychological level and socialisation level. There's no way you would come out unscathed. It is deeply embedded by the mythologies and stereotypes that are there. I used to go to New Farm Park when I was 14 and throw things at the Aboriginal people cause that's what most young White 14 year old Australians do who come from the suburbs. They go into the city; it's a big experience to go to a movie and throw stuff at Aboriginal people. I mean, it's horrific but that's the history. It's just really stupid to assume that you can not be racist. The hope is to become conscious of that and to work on a re-socialisation base. At least that's how I understand it. I am a Jungian, Freudian person and a slip of the tongue is critical in terms of understanding. It gives insight into what's going on, so those initial feelings, if you ignore that, it's at your own loss cause there's a story there to be explored. I think that's a huge part of the journey. One of the beauties about working in South Africa that has become really clear to me is that a lot of African people are racist, so that enabled me to be more honest about my own racism and for us to laugh about it, around the table, people I had good relations with: hey, we're all racists, so what are we going to do about it? It's a really important step. It's an intellectual step: we are racists.

12.30 There was that powerful emotive,
Angry response of my own
Which helped me identify
The degree to which
Race was embedded within my sight.
Intellectually it's easy to understand.
It's only when you are pushed a bit further
That you have to come to terms
With the other experiences.
That's really hard
When people play the race card

To destroy your credibility.
That evokes a lot of emotion.
You have to do a lot of reflection.
I subscribe to the view
That most of us are racist
At a deep level.
It's becoming conscious of that
That is critical.

12.31 **The participant explains that it is possible to bridge the gap between cultures to some extent through relationship with a person who is competent in both cultures. Someone with a foot in both worlds can help one understand other worldviews.**

12.32 I had some really good Black friends who were pretty Westernised. They can bridge the gap. They are the people you could not only work close with, but actually spend a lot of time with. They're very meaningful relationships.

12.33 A colleague of mine was a wonderful youth leader, a community worker, but traditional. His worldview was filled with understanding of the ancestors. When he was sick, he would go to the sangoma, the traditional doctor to sacrifice. And the doctor would say, 'Here's the ancestor whom is obviously causing this affliction.' I come from a Christian background, but I've moved a long way in terms of understanding an enchanted world where there's a whole heap of mythologies that evoke power in our lives, a whole heap of rituals that are very important. I really appreciated engaging with that understanding: how Zulu people perceive that Spirit world, the ancestor world, how someone like Thami was really struggling with his traditional culture and now operating in a modern world. He has a deep belief in saving the Zulu culture from destruction and a deep affinity to those worldviews, but also an antagonism to the patriarchal and generational kind of hierarchies and divides that traditional stuff generates.

12.34 **At times, understanding is developed through relationship. At other times, relationship does not lead to understanding.**

12.35 My neighbour in South Africa, a White Afrikaner boy, was incredibly racist. Because he lived next door to me, we had a range of Black people who lived with us and I had a heap of Black colleagues visit. He got to know some of those Black people quite well. We often argue it's within the context or relationship that people change, but he didn't. He will relate to Black people that he gets on well with, but still all the stereotypes and prejudices and ideology is exactly the same, it hasn't shifted.

12.36 The story of Hein was a big challenge, yet I've changed in the context of relationships talking to Sipho, this Black fellow who would tell me about his culture and why they did things, so you would understand why things happen. That understanding builds a celebration of diversity which enables you to overcome racism.

12.37 **The participant finds himself challenged by his own race privilege.**

12.38 I had to have a bit of a break (from race issues in South Africa). Which is difficult to say to yourself, 'I need a break from this.' Because it's a privilege to have a break.

12.39 **The participant experiences a tension between Indigenous elders' and youth attitudes regarding social change. When he works with Indigenous people for social change, he must decide which Indigenous group to support on specific issues.**

12.40 South Africa is a modern state yet the community is still run by tribal leadership, yet a lot of the youth are wanting to have democratic leadership. The tribal leaders don't want development and they sit on everything. They stop most things. So there's politics about generational conflict. I made a decision in South Africa to work with youth and to work consultatively with tribal leadership, but I never saw changes coming from tribal leadership. I'm pretty committed to change. I know there's all sorts of problems around that, within the context of people saying, 'We've had enough of Western impact and change.' But the realities are that change is ocurring, so who's going to be the agent for change?